THE HISTORY OF THE Seven Wise Masters OF ROME.

Now newly Corrected, better Explained in many places, and Enlarged with many pretty Pictures, lively expressing the full

HISTORY.

London, Printed by *E. Crowh*, for *J. Wright*, next to the Globe in *Little-Brittain*. 1673.

27282.51

1878, Sept. 2.

Minot fund.

$3.00

To the Reader.

READER,

Or thy better delight, and more plainly to set forth the History to thy view, I have to my great cost, added many pictures, lively expressing the most material points of mine, If I may receive thy thanks, I think it a sufficient Reward. The History of it self is both Antient and Morral, and containeth in it much Learning.

When Ignorance, having a thick and dull ear, blinded most people, Men are compelled to draw the rude multitude to Attention of good Instruction, by such pleasing allurments of Tales and Fables, as in this Book is set down; that as the mind is fed and delighted with the sweetness of Fabulous Stories, the Soul it self at the end (by often tasting the same Nourishment) grows quicker-sighted, to behold the hidden and mistical Wisdom contained under such close Riddles. For in few words, to give you the meaning of this Moral, It is thus: The Emperor may signifie the World,

who having but one only Son, (who is Man) him to bring up well is all his care. But man losing his own Mother, (who is Reason, or Devine Grace) falling into the hand of his Step-mother (signifying *Sin*) who is an Empress of great bewitching, and one that commands the World; She works by all means possible the confusion of Man, and would prevail against his weakness, but that a Star from Heaven (by which is meant Goodness from above) instructs Man how to avoid the Alurements of Sin, by not opning his mouth to bid her welcome. And the better to prevent her mischief, He hath *Seven Wise Masters*, which are the Seven Libral Scientes, to give him wholesome Instructions, and by those helps save him from mortal danger. So that being thus Armed, Man liveth to batter down Sin, (Figured in the death of the Empress and her Minion) and in the end, to gain a rich Crown of Glory and happiness, set ready for all those that in this Life labour to attain to Heaven by doing well.

This is the Explanation of the Morral; of which if thou make right use, it will be a rich Banquet to thy Soul. *Fare-well.*

HERE

Here beginneth the

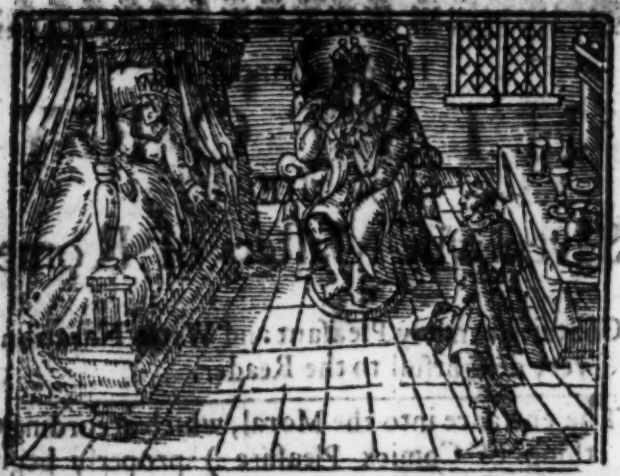
HISTORY
OF THE
Seven wise Masters of Rome.

Containing many Pleasant and Witty Narations, very delightfull to the Reader.

The entrance into the Moral, which according to things of Comick Pleasure) properly begins with a Funeral.

SOmetime in the City of Rome there was a famous Emperor, named Pontianus, a man of great Wisdom, he took to his Wife a Kings Daughter that was very fair and amiable, to all people gracious, and to her Husband right dear: She Conceived by him and was delivered of a Son named Diocle-sian. The Child grew apace, and of all people was beloved: and when he was of the age of se-ven years, his mother the Empress falling sick and feeling her self that she might not live, sent after her Lord the Emperor (being rode forth on Progress) a Messenger that he should return without tarying, if ever he would see her alive.

And



And when he was come, she said unto him, Oh my dear Lord, of this sickness I may not escape, wherefore the natural and tender love and care that is to me towards you and your Son, makes a suit to you before my death. He replied, desire what you will, I shall not deny you any thing. Then said she after my death you will take another wife as is most convenient: wherefore I beseech you, that she over my son have no power but that he be nourished far from her, & trained up in learning. The Emperor answered, my most dear wife, your Petition in all things shall be performed. Then turned the Empress, and gave up the Ghost. Many days after, the Emperor bewailed his death: long after shewed his heaviness, and would in no wise be joyful.

How

How the Emperor commited and delivered his Son to the Seven wise Masters, to be instructed in Learning.

UPon a time as the Emperor lay in his bed he thought himself inwardly of his Son, saying in his heart, I have but only on Son, the which shall be my heir: it is good whilst he is young, that he be set to learn Cuning and Wisdom, by which he may after my death govern and rule the Empire, intimating thereby that a worthy Prince taking upon him so great a weight and charge, as the Government of a Kingdom, ought first to learn to be his own governor, and to Master his own affections. So that when he was early risen up from his bed, he caused to be called the Lords of his Council before him, and of them took advice what were best therein to be done. And they answered, Lord: in Rome are seven Wise Masters, who live in great fame for their excellency in Arts: grave counsel, and instructions, let them be sent for, and deliver them your Son to be fostered and instructed in learning. The Emperor understanding that, sent his Letters made powerful by his own Seal, to the Seven Wise Masters, that they should come to him without delay: they soon came before the Emperor, and he demanded of them, if they knew wherefore he had sent for them; They answered, The cause is as your will intendeth, we know not but

but if it pleaſe you to ſhew us your mind, we be ready to fulfil it to the utmoſt of our powers. To whom the Emperor ſaid, I have but one Son, which I ſhall deliver to you to confirm in all good ways of Learning & Vertue, ſo that by your Doctrine and Wiſdom, he may more wiſely govern the Empire after my deceaſe.

The firſt Maſter named Pantillas ſaid, Lord deliver me your Son, and I ſhall teach him as much cunning within ſeven years, as I & all my fellows can.

Then ſpeak the ſecond Maſter named Lentulus, Sir, of long time I have ſerved you and hitherto have had no reward. I demand nothing of you, but that you deliver me your Son to govern, and I ſhall make him as cunning within ſix years as I and all my fellow.

The

The third Master named Craton, said: my Lord, many times I have been with you on the sea in peril of my life, and have had no manner of reward: if I might for my recompence obtain, that you will vouchsafe to commit your Son under my Governance, I should inform him as much in five years, if his wit will thereto attain, as I and my fellows can.

Then stood up the fourth Master, named Malquidrack, who was right long of body, and said, My Lord, remember I and all my Predecessors, have served Emperors, & received no reward? wherefore I ask no other thing: But that you deliver me your Son to teach, and I shall make him take as much Science and Wisdom within four years, as I and all my fellows have learned in all our lives.

Then spake the fifth Master, that was named Josephus, Lord, I am old, and many times am called to your Counsel and you know that my Counsel hath profited you, and so likewise may it do hereafter: Yet I desire no more, but that you deliver me your Son, and I shall instruct him in as much cunning and Science, that he within three years shall be prompt in Wit as much, as I and all my Fellows have.

Then came the sixth Master named Cleophes, who said like to the other, promising to inform the Child in all their cunning in two years.

The seventh Master also desired the Child, and promised to learn him within one year, the Science and wisdom of them all.

When all this was done, the Emperor said, My trusty friend. I am very much bound to thank you all and every one of you, for that you have so earnestly desired to foster and instruct my Son: If I should now commit him to one & not to another, thereupon would ensue much dissention among you. Therefore to you, all & every of you, I commit my Son to be nourished & taught. The Masters hearing this, expressing both their greatness of joy, and forwardness in will to the Emperor all with one harmony of consent, received his Son, and led him towards the Court of Rome. Upon the way spake Craton to his fellows; if we this Child should teach within the City of Rome, there is so great resort and concourse of people, that it would hinder him in the Learning; I know a fair place from Rome some two miles, right pleasant & delectable, there let us make a four-square Chamber of stone, and put him therein and upon the walls thereof, let us paint & write the seven Liberal Arts, so that the Child at all times may see and behold his Doctrine therein as well as in his book: this advice pleased them all, and was done accordingly in every point: the Masters diligently every day, during seven yeares, taught and instructed the Child, and deter-

determined among them selves, and said, it is good that we examin our disciple, to see at what perfection our pains hath arrived, and what strength & growth his vertue and knowledge is come to: and they all wisely and religiously accorded to that Counsel, then said Master Pantillas, how shall we prove him, Craton said Let every one of us as he sleepeth, put under every corner of his bed an Olive-leaf, and then we shall know if he perceived or felt any thing or not: this done, he awaking, greatly marvelled and lifted up his eyes towards the roof of the Chamber fervently. The Masters seing that said, wherefore lift you up your eys so sharply: he answered, it is no marvel, for in my sleep, I saw the upper most part of the Chamber inclined towards the earth, or else under me it was lifted up: the Masters hearing this said among themselves: if this child live, he shall be a man of great cunning and fame.

How the Emperour by the Counsel of the great Princes and Lords of his Empire, wedded another Wife.

The Princes and great Lords of the Empire, in the mean time came to the Emperor, and said: My Lord, ye have only on Son, it is possible he might die, therefore it were profitable that you would wed another Wife

that thereby your joys & hopes might be blest with far more certainty and assured happiness in your Race and Issue, to the intent that the Empire of Rome be not left without an Heir. Moreover, ye are so mighty, that if it should happen you to get many children, you may promot and advance them all to great Dignities and Lordships. Whereupon answered the Emperor: is it your Counsel that I shall take an other Wife: then seek me one that is Gracious, a pure Virgin, Fair and Gentle born, and then I shall follow your Counsel and Advice. They went and sought and searched out many Kingdoms and Countries; and at the last, they found the Kings Daughter of Castile that was right fair and beautiful, and her they gave the Emperor to Wife; who behaved her self so well, that anon he was so greatly taken in her Love, that he forgot all the sorrow of heart he had taken for the Death of his first Wife. And when they had lived long together without any Children, and the Empress saw that she might not Conceive when she heard the Emperor had a Son with the Seven Wise Masters, to be fostered and taught, to the great Good and Profit of the Empire. She thought in her self, and wished his Death. And from that very hour imagined how she might conspir his destruction. It happened on a Night as the Emperor lay in his

bed.

bed he said to the Empress: My most dear and best beloved wife, I shall know open to you the secrets of my heart, for under the Sun there is no creature that I love so well as you, and therefore trust in my love.

Then said the fair Empress: if it be so as you say, I require of you, on little boon or petition. Desire what you will, said the Emperor & all that me is possible, I shall fulfil, and give it to you. Then said the Empress, my dear Lord, you know I have no child yet by you conceived for which I am sore pensive and heavy, but Fame, that never conceals it self long to true joy, hath delivered this happy truth to me: that ye have one son only, the which is set to the seven Wise Masters to be taught and governed, and him I hold and require for my own Son: wherefore I beseech ye send for him, that I may see him, and have consolation of his presence, as though he were mine own. Hereupon answered the Emperor, it is sixteen years past since I saw him, your will shall be fulfilled. Incontinent the Emperor sent unto the seven wise Masters a Letter sealed with his secret Sing, that upon pain of death they should bring his Son in the feast of Pentecost following.

How the seven Wise Masters after the sight of the Emperors Letter, would first observe the course and divine fore shewing of the Firmament, and

Planets, whether it were good to obey his commandment or not.

AND when the Maſters by the Letter had underſtood ꝑ Emperors will, in the night they went and beheld the Stars in the Firmament, whether it would be expedient to bring the child to the Emperor or not? & they ſaw clearly in the ſtars, that if they ſhould lead the child in that time aſſigned, at the firſt word he ſhould ſpeak he ſhould dis an evil death: wherefore they were all very ſorry, & as they beheld another Star, they ſaw, that if they delivered not the Child at the day aforeſaid, they ſhould loſe their heads. Then ſaid one of them of two evils the leaſt is to be choſen: it is better that all we die, than that the Child ſhould loſe his life: there-

shew me some token of love: what shall I do? speak to me, I am ready to perform your will: And when she had thus said, she imbraced him, and would have kissed his mouth, but he turn'd his visage from her, and in no wise would consent; then she said again, O Son, wherefore do you thus with me? let us sleep together, & then shal ye perceive, that for your love I have kept my Verginity: but he turn'd his visage again from her; she seeing that of her he was ashamed, shewing unto him her naked body, and breasts, saying: Behold my Son, what body I have, it is at your will, a servant to your pleasure: give me your consent, or it shall be hard for me to depart hence with my right mind. He shewed her no manner of love, but as much as he could withdrew himself from her. When she saw that, she said: O my best Son, if it please you not to consent unto me (yet speak) perhaps for some reasonable cause? Lo, here is Pen, Ink and Paper, then write your will, whether I may at any time hereafter trust in your love or not. The child wrote as followeth. O Lady, God forbid that I should defile my Fathers Orchard: For *I* wot not what Fruit *I* should have of it: I know well that *I* should Sin greatly in the sight of God, and also run in the malidiction of my Father; & therefore from henceforth *I* pray you prevoke me no more thereto.

When she had seen and read the writing,

the writing, she tore it with her teeth, and rent her clothes to her Navel, and scratched her Visage, till it was all bloody, and cast from her al the Ornaments of her head, and cryed out with a loud voice: Come hither my Lords and help me. lest this rude and evil body shame and ravish me.

How the Empers complained to the Emperor, of the shame done unto her by his Son.

The Emperor being in the Hall, & hearing the cry of the Empress, hastily run toward her Chamber, with many of his Knights and servants following him, to know the matter. Then began the Empress to cry and speak to the Emperor in this wise: O my Lord, have pitty on me: behold this young man is not your Son but the foulest for Ribaldry & actions of Luxury, that ever sin and heat put strenght in to: for as you know, I led him into my chamber, and would have exhorted and caused him to have spoken; I have done as much therfore as I can or may; & whilst I moved him to have spoken, he hath endeavoured himself with me to have sinned; and because I would not consent, but withstood as much as I might to flie the same, he hath made my visage all bloody, & torn my vesture & Ornaments off my head, as you may see; and if you had not soon come unto my calling, he had enyed in me, his most foul

him that it grew not so much as it should do, and he said to the Gardiner: how may this be, and he said, it is no wonder, for this great Tree hath so great arms and branches, that the air may not come to the root of the young tree, then said the Burgess, cut and hew off the arms and the boughs, that the air may come thereto. The Gardiner did as he commanded. The Burgess came again another time to see the young Plant, and thought that it grew never the better, and said to the Gardiner: what is it that letteth this plant not to grow now: and he said I suppose the height of the old Tree letteth the Sun, that the rain may not come thereto, and therefore it cannot grow. Then said the Master unto him, hew down that Tree to the ground, for I hope of this Plant to have a better then ever that was. The Gardiner hearing his Master, hewed down the Tree; and as soon as this was done, the young Plant perished, and come to nought: wherefore there came great harm; for when the poor sick people perceived that the Tree was destroyed (they cursed all them that ware Counselers and helpers thereto (by the which they oftentimes were healed, and cured of their infirmities: then said the Empress to her Lord, understand ye what I have said: he answered, yea right well: then said she, I will declare the meaning of that I have said.

the

The Declaration of the Example.

This Tree, my Lord, betokeneth your most noble Person, how that with your Counsel and help many poor and sick folks are greatly comforted: & the young Imp which is grown under the great Tree, is your accursed Son, that now by cunning beginneth to grow, and studieth first, how he might cut off the arms & boughs of your might, and how to win to him the Land, and favour of the people, yea & more unnaturally, imagineth to destroy your person, that he may himself reign, but what shall then ensue thereof? All poor and feeble people shall curse them, who might have destroy'd your son, and have not yet done it: Therefore I counsel you, whilst you are in power, that ye destroy him, least the curse of the people fall upon you. Then said the Emperor, Ye have given me good counsel: to morrow I shall condemn him to the vilest death that can be thought upon. When the day was, the Emperor went and sat in judgement, and commanded his servants to lead his Son to be hanged with Trumpets sounding in token of death. As the Emperors Son was led through the City, the common people began to weep and cry, Alas the onely Son of the Emperor is led towards his death: And therewithal came Pantillas the first Master riding upon a Horse. When the Child saw

saw him, he bowed his head, as though he said: mind me, when you come before my Father, see how I am led towards the Gallows. Then the Master said to the Servants: Make no haste, for I hope by the grace of God this day to deliver him from death. Then said all the people: O good Master haste you to the Palace, and save your Disciple, he smote his horse with his Spurs till he came to the Palace, and knæled to the Emperor, and did him reverence. To whom the Emperor said: it shall never be to thee good; who answered, I have deserved a better reward. The Emperor said, thou lieſt; for I delivered my Son to thee well mannered, and now he is brought home dumb & hath sought to work his will, to the shame of my vertuous Empress, and the dishonour of his Fathers bed for ever, therefore this day shall he die; and ye shall die a shameful death. Then said the Master, Lord forasmuch as your Son speaketh not, the cause thereof God knoweth, and without cause it is not, as you shall understand: and whereas you say, that he would have committed the sin of inforcement on your Empress, I shall say to you of a truth: He hath bin in our company to the space of fiftæn years, and we never could perceive such an abuse by him. Therefore, my dear Lord, I shall, shew you one thing, that if you put your Son to death for the words of your Wife: it shall happen to you

wise then to a Knight, that killed his best Grey-hound (through the words of his Wife, which saved his Son from death. Then said the Emperor to the Master: Tell me that example. The Master said, Lord that shall I not do for before I shall end, your Son might be dead, and then without hope should I rehearse it: but if it please you, this noble example to hear, call again your Son till to morrow; and as you think by reason, then do with him your pleasure. As the Emperor heard that, anon he willed the Child to be called again: and in the mean time he set him in prison, while the Master finished his Tale: and then began in this manner following:

The first Example of the first Master.

There was a valiant Knight had one onely Son, as you have, which he loved so much that he ordained for his Keepers three nourishers: The first should give him suck, and feed him. The second wash, him and, keep him clean: and the third should bring him to his keep and rest. The Knight had also an Grey-hound and a Falcon, which he also loved right well. The Grey-hound was so good, that he never ran at any Game, but he took it, and held it till his Master came. And if his Master disposed him to go to any battel, if he should not spend therein, anon as he should mount upon his

horse

down upon the earth, compassed round about with blood, and the Grey-hound also bloody, and said among themselves, that the Grey-hound had slain the Child: and were not so wise as to turn up the Cradle again with the Child, to see what was befallen: And said, let us run away, lest that our Master should lay the blame upon us, and slay us. Running away, they met the Knights wife, and she said unto them: Wherefore make ye this sorrow, and whether will you run? then they said, O Lady, woe be to us, and to you! Why said she, what is happen'd, shew me. the Grey-hound, they said, that our Lords Master loved so well, hath devoured and slain your Son, and lieth by the Wall full of blood. As the Lady heard this, she presently fell to the earth and began to weep piteously, and said: Alas! O my dear Son, are ye thus slain? What shall I now do, that I have mine onely Son thus lost? Here withal came in the Knight from the Tourney; beholding his Lady crying, he demanded wherefore she made so great lamentation? She answered: O my Lord the Grey-hound you loved so much, hath slain your only Son, and lyeth by the Wall satiated with the blood of the Child. The Knight exceeding angry, went into the Hall; the Grey-hound rose to meet him and did fawn upon him as he was wont: But the Knight drew out his Sword, and with one stroke smote off the

Grey-hounds head; then he went to the Cradle where the child lay, and found his Son whole; and by the Child, the Serpent lay slain; and by divers signs, perceived the Grey-hound had kill'd the serpent for the defence of the Child. Then with great sorrow he tore his hair, and said: woe is me that for the words of my wife I have slain my best Grey-hound, which have saved my Childs life, and slain the Serpent; therefore I will put my self to pennance, and so he broke his Sword in three pieces, and went towards the Holy Land, and abode there all the days of his life. Then said the Master to the Emperor Lord, understand ye what I have said; and he answered right well. The Master said, if you put your son to death for the words of your wife; it shall happen to you worse than it did to the Knight for his Grey-hound. The Empress said, ye have shewed me a fair example? without doubt this day my Son shall not die. Then said the Master, if you do so, you do wisely? and I thank you, that you have spared him this day for my sake.

The second Complaint of the Empress. A sorrow mingled with much cunning and falsehood.

When the Empress heard the Child was not yet dead, she began to weep bitterly, and sate her down on the earth in Ashes, and would

would not lift up her head. When the Emperor heard that, he entred the Chamber, and said unto her: O good wife, wherefore make you all this sorrow, and trouble your self so much: she said, ask ye that of me; Know you not what shame I have suffered of your unhappy son, and ye have promised me that you would see justice to be thereupon executed on him, and yet he liveth? Of a troth it will happen to you, as to a Shepherd and a Boze. The Emperor said, I pray you shew me that example for my learning: she said, yesterday I shewed you one, and saw no good effect that came thereof: To what end shall I now do the like? Nevertheless I shall declare this noble example unto you, as hereafter you shall hear.

The second Example of the Empress.

There was some time an Emperor which had a great Forrest, wherein was a wild Boze, so cruel and fierce, that he devoured men going through the Forrest. The Emperor therefore being right heavy, proclaimed throughout his Dominions, That whosoever could slay the Bore, should have his onely Daughter to his Wife, and the Empire after his death. As this was in all places proclaimed, there was not one man found that durst give the adventure. But there was a Shepherd, who thought in himself: might I the Bore overcome any slay, I should

not only advance my self, but also my generation and kindred. So he took his shepheres staf in his hand went to the Forrest; and as the Boze had of him a sight, he drew towards the Herdsman but he for fear climbed into a Træ, and then the Boze began to bite & gnaw the træ,

so that the Herd thought shortly he would have overthrow it. This Træ was loaden with plenty of fruit, and the Herd gathered thereof and cast them to the Boze, insomuch that when he was filled therewith he laid him down to slæp; which when the Herd perceived, he by Little and little descended the Træ, and with the one hand clawed the Boze, and with the other held him about the Træ, and seeing the Boze slept very soundly, drawing out his knife,

smote

ſmote the Boze to the heart, and killed him, and ſhortly after wedded the Emperors daughter: and after the death of her Father, he was made Emperor. Then ſaid ſhe, my Lord, wot ye not what I have ſaid? He ſaid, right well: Then ſaid ſhe, this mighty Boze betokeneth your moſt noble Perſon, againſt whom may no man withſtand, neither by wiſdom, nor ſtrength. This Shepherd with his Staff, is the perſon of your ungratious Son, who with his Staff of cunning, beginneth to play with you as the Herdſman clawed the Boze, made him ſleep, and after killed him. In the ſame manner, the Maſters of your Son, by their falſe fables and narrations claw you, and cloſe with you, until your Son ſlay you, that he may Reign. Then ſaid the Emperor: God forbid they ſhould do to me, as he did to the Wild Boze; and he ſaid unto her: this day my Son ſhall die: and ſhe anſwered, if you do ſo, then do ye wiſely. Then the Emperor the ſecond time ſitting in Judgement, commanded to lead him to the place of Execution appointed for that purpoſe. Whilſt he was going, the ſecond Maſter came before the Emperor, doing him great reverence, as before he ſhewed in the coming of the firſt Maſter, to whom the ſecond Maſter ſaid; O my Lord and Emperor, if you ſhould ſlay your Son for the words of your Wife, it ſhall happen worſe to you, then it did

to

to a certain Knight, which for the words of his wife was unjustly put upon the Pillory. The Emperor said O good Master, tell me how that happened: and he said, My Lord, I shall not say it, unless you will call your only Son from the death, until the example be told, which if it turn not you from your purpose, then your will be fulfilled, then the Emperor commanded the child should be call'd again: and after this manner following, the second Master began to tell.

The Example of the second Master.

IN a City was an antient Knight, which wedded a young wife and fair, as ye have done, whom he loved above all earthly things: The Knight was a very circumspect and careful husband insomuch that every night he locked the door with his own hands and laid the key under his Beds-head. In that City was a law or custom, that at a certain hour in the night, a bell was used to be rung, that after the ringing of the said bell, if any man or woman were by the Watch-men found about the streets, all that night they should be kept in Prison, and on the morrow set upon the Pillory, that all people might behold them.

The said Knight had little lust of fleshly deeds, perform the desires and appetites of his young

Wife

wife, wherefore every night she having a Paramour, her Husband sleeping, took the keys from under his Beds-head, and went to her Love; and when she came again, laid the keys under her husbands head: and thus they played many a time.

It happened upon a night that the Knight awaked from his sleep, and missed his wife, and the Keys under his Beds-head, whereupon he rose up and went unto the doors, and found them open, the which he bolted fast within, and went up again into his Chamber, and looked out of the Window towards the Street: and when it was near the third Cocks crow, his Wife came from her best beloved; and found the door shut and bolted within: then was she sorrowful: Nevertheless she knocked to have come in. Then spake the Knight out of the Window, O thou most wicked and unchast Wife, now I know that many times thou hast forsaken my bed, and gone and done Adultery. now thou shalt stand until the bell be rung, that the Watch-men may take thee, and do with thee according to the Law. His wife answered: My Lord, why do you say that to me: For in very truth the cause of my being abroad, was for no ill, but I was by my mothers maid fetched in the night; and when I saw you sleep so sweetly, I durst not awake you because ye are old, and therefore I took the keys and went to

my

my Mother, who is sore sick, that I fear to morrow she must be anointed, or annihiled: Notwithstanding, because I would not you offend, I have talked again unto you, and have left her lying in great pain; therefore I pray you for the love of God, let me in before the Bell ringeth. The Knight answered: ye shall not come in, ye must abide there until the Bell ringeth, and until the Watch-men come and take you: then said she, that would be to you, and to me, and unto all our friends and kindred a great shame; therefore for the reverence of Almighty God, let me in. Then said he, have in thy mind, evil and false Wife, how oftentimes thou hast forsaken my bed, and done Adultery: it is much better thou suffer shame, and bewail for thy sins here in this world, than to suffer pain in Hell. She said again to him: I pray you for the love of him that was crucified, and died on the Cross, have mercy on me. The Knight said, thou labourest in vain, for thou shalt tarry the coming of the Watchmen. She hearing that, said: my Lord, ye know by this dore standeth a well, if you let me not come in, I shall there drown my self rather than all my Friends should be ashamed for me: then said he, would to God thou hadst been drowned long before thou comest in my bed. As they thus spake the Moon went down, and all was very dark: then said she, if it will be no other-

wise

wife, I ſhall drown my ſelf; but yet before, like a True Chriſtian Woman, I will make my Teſtament; firſt, I bequeath to God my ſoul, and my body to be buried in the Church of St. Peter: and all other things and goods that God hath ſent me, I give you to diſpoſe for my ſoul after your diſcretion. And when he had thus ſaid, ſhe went unto the Well, and there lying a great ſtone, with both her arms ſhe lift it up and ſaid: now I drown my ſelf, and ſo caſt the

ſtone down into the Well, and went again pitifully and ſtood by the dore. The Knight hearing the noiſe, cryed with a very loud voice: Alas, alas, my ſweet wife is drowned, and haſtily came down, and ran to the Well: And when ſhe ſaw the dore open, preſently ſhe entred, and lock-

locked the doꝛ, and went up into the Chamber, and lay, and looked out at the Window. The Knight stood by the well, & wept bitterly, and said: Woe to me. I have now lost my best beloved Wife; Cursed be the time that I made fast the doꝛ against her. When the Lady heard that, she said, O thou cursed old Greyheard, who standest thou here at this time of the night? Was not my body sufficient? Wherefoꝛe go you thus every night to your harlots and leave my bed? as he heard the voice of his Wife he was right glad, and said; Blessed be God that yet she is not drowned: But my good Lady wherefoꝛe do you lay such things against me: I thought to have chastised you, and therefoꝛe I locked the doꝛ, but in no wise I intended it to your peril: ye know well what soꝛrow I made foꝛ you, when I heard you fall into the Well; and therefoꝛe I came, thinking to have helped you. Whereupon she said, thou liest I never committed such faults as thou layest to me, but it appeareth by a common Proverb, he that is guilty oꝛ culpable himself of a sin, judgeth every man to be in the same; oꝛ else, the father never sought his son in the Oven except he had been therein himself. In like case conceivest thou a false surmise of me: But one thing I promise thee, thou shalt abide there till the Watch-men come, and the Bell be rung that they may lead thee before the Judges, t

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abide and suffer the Law. Then said the Knight: Wherefore lay you such things to me that am old, impotent, and unmeet to delight in such a game? I have dwelt long in this City, and never was defamed; therefore let me in, that to me or your self you do no shame. She said: Ye say in vain, it is better ye fore-think your sins in this world, than in Hell: have in minde what the wise man saith, A poor man Proud, a rich man a Lyar, and an old man a fool, God hateth: so be you, a Fool, and Rich. What need you to slander me, and cannot be content when you have the flower of my youth at your pleasure, but yet runnest to Harlots; and therefore it is the great grace of God, that you have time to forethink it, lest ye should be damned for more sins: therefore suffer som penance patiently. the Knight said: O my best beloved Lady, although it be so: God is merciful: and asketh nothing of a sinner, but that he amend his life, and do penance for his sins. Now let me in, and I will make amends. She said: What Devil made you so good a Preacher, but yet you come not in. As they was spake, the bell rung, then he intreated her fervently, saying, Now suffer me to come in that I be not shamed for ever: She answered, The ringing of the Bell doth portend the health of your soul. And as this was said, presently came the Watch-men about the City,

and

and found the Knight standing in the street and said to him; O good man, it is not good that ye stand here in this hour of the night. As she heard this voice of the Watch-men, she said, Good fellows, avenge me on that old accursed Whore-hunter, for ye know whose daughter I am: this accursed old man is wont every night to leave my bed, and go to his Whores; I have long forborn him, and would not complain on him to my friends, but I trusted that he would have amended his mis-rule, but it helpeth not: Therefore punish him after the Law, that all such old Dotards may take example by him. Then the Watch-men took him, and all night chastised him in prison, and on the morrow put him on the Pillory. Now said the Master to the Emperor, Lord have you understood what I have said, and he said right well. Then said the Master, if you put to death your Son, by the instigation of your Wife, it shall chance unto you worse than to the Knight.

The Emperor said, she was the worst woman that ever I heard of, that so falsly brought her Husband to shame and rebuke: I say, Master, for this example my son shall not die this day. The Master said unto him if you do so, you do wisely, and hereafter you shall joy: so I commit to God, and thank you for your patient hearing, and for sparing of your Son; and so he departed.

The third Complaint of the Empress, more full of cunning sorrow then the former.

WHen the Empress heard the Child was not dead, she wept bitterly, and enter'd her privy Chamber, and tore her skin with her nails, and with a loud voice cried, Alas, that ever I was born, that so great a Kings daughter should be thus intreated and shamed, and can have no remedy. Her Gentlewoman hearing this, went and shewed it to the Emperor, & he went unto her, and comforted her, saying, O Lady, weep not so, for it behoveth you not. Who answered, the love that I owe unto you, maketh me more sorrow than the contempt of death: For why, the inward love of your heart hath hitherto prohibited me, that I have not returned into my Country to my Father: but I fear, should I do so, it might turn to your harm, for he is mighty to honour me with riches, and to revenge my quarrel in such wise that ye might repent it. Whereunto said the Emperor, let that pass out of your mind, nor repent it any more, for as long as I live, I shall never fail you. And she said, Lord, I pray God you may long live: but I fear it may happen to you, as it befel to a Knight and his Son, that would not bury his fathers head in the Church yard, yet his Father pray'd for him. Then said the Emperor, shew me the example, that we

would not bury his Fathers head, she said I shall do it for your profit.

The third Example of the Empress.

IN the City of Rome, there was a Knight which had two daughters and one son. This Knight had such delight in Hunting, Justing, and Turney, that all things he might win and get, he spent in th reupon. In that time lived an Emperor named Octavian, which in riches of Gold and Silver exceeded other Kings and Princes, insomuch that he had a Tower full of Gold, and ordained a Knight to have the keeping and charge thereof. This Knight by Hunting, Justing, and other idle Games, came to so great poverty, that he was forced out of the extremity of his adverse fortunes, to sell his Heritage, and called to him his Son, and said, my Son, it behoveth me of your counsel, for necessity compelleth me to sell mine Heritage, or else to find some other way, whereby I may live: for if I should sell mine Heritage, you and your sisters would perish. Then the Son said, Father if you can find any manner of means, without selling your Heritage, I should be ready to help you. The Father said, I have thought on a good counsel: The Emperor hath a great Tower full of Gold, by night-time let us with Instruments dig and hew through the Tower, and let us take of the

Gold

Gold as much as shall suffice us. Whereunto the son answered, that counsel cannot be amended: for it is better of the Emperors Gold to take (to help us) than to sell our Heritage.

So they arose in the night, and went to the Tower, and with instruments made an hole thorow the wall, & took as much Gold as they could beth carry away at that time: And the Knight payed his Debts, and haunted again Justs as he did before, until all was consumed. In the mean while the Keeper of the Treasure went into the Tower; and when he saw the treasure stolen, and a great hole made thorow the wall, he began to wax sore afraid, and went into the Emperor; shewed what had befel

To whom the Emperor said all angry, What næds thou to shew me that? have I not delivered to thee my treasure? therefore of thee I will ask it. Anon as the Kæper heard that, he went to the Tower again, and set before the hole a great Vessel full of Pitch melted, with other Gins of subtility, that no man might come in at the hole, but he must næds fall into that Vessel, and if he had therein fell, he could no more come out of it. Not long after the Knight had all the Gold consumed and spent, and went again with his Son to steal more Gold: And as the Father went in first, anon he was fallen into the Vessel full of Pitch to the neck; and when he saw he was taken, and could not get out, he said to his Son, follow me not; for if thou do'st, thou canst not escape by any means. Then said the Son, God defend that I should not help you: For if you are found, we are all dead; and if you may not be holpen by me, I shall seek counsel how you may be delivered. The Father said, there is no other counsel but with thy Sword smite off my Head, and as my Body is found without an Head, no man shall know me, and so thou and my Daughters may escape this Worldly shame and Death. The Son said: Father, ye have given the best Counsel: For if it were so that any man might perceive any knowledge of you, none of us all shall escape Death; and

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it is expedient that your head be smitten off: Anon he drew out his Sword, and smote off his Fathers head, and cast it into a pit, and then went and shewed unto his sisters all the matter; who many days after, privily bewailed the death of their father. After this the Kæper of the Treasury came into the Tower, and found a Body without an Head: whereas he wondered sore, and shewed it to the Emperor; to whom he said: Bind that body to the tayl of an horse, and so draw him thorow all the streets of the City, and diligently take good heed if ye here any cry or weeping: Wheresoever ye do hear that, he was Lord of the House; take all them and the body, draw them to the Gallows and hang them. The which the Emperors Servants fulfilled according to his commandment. And as they came against the House of the dead Knight, the Daughters seeing the body of their dead Father made a marvellous great shrek, and wept pitiously: And as their Brother heard that, he wounded himself with a Knife, so that great plenty of Blood came out of the wound: The Officers when they heard the cry, entred the House, and demanded the cause of their clamour. Then answered the Son, they lament because I am thus wounded; for when my sisters saw the blood so abundantly to go out, as you see they began to weep and cry, and when the Officers saw the

wound

wound, they believe his words, and so went and hang'd the Knights Body upon the Gallows, where he hung a long time and his Son would neither take his body down from the Gallows, nor yet bury his head. The Empress said, understand ye what I have said? the Emperor said, right well.

The Declaration of the Example.

Then spake the Empress thus: my Lord I fear it will so chance to you and to your Son: the Knight for the love of his Son was made poor, and first, he committed Theft, and brake the Tower: secondly, caused himself to be beheaded, that his Children should have no shame. After the Son cast his head into the Dike, and buried it not, neither in Church nor Church-yard; and his Body he suffered to hang still upon the Gallows: if he could not have taken it down in the day, he might well have done it in the night. In the same manner ye labour night and day, that ye may promote your Son to Honour and Riches; but without doubt he laboureth for your destruction, that he may reign after you in your Empire. Therefore I advise you speedily to take away his life, who living, would suddenly prove the destruction of yours. The Emperor said: you have shewed me a good example. The Knights son, when he had smitten off his Fathers head, would not bury it: Without doubt my Son shall not do

so

so to me. Then anon he commanded his Officiers, that they should lead him to the Gallows; and they all obeyed his Commandment hastily. As they led him through the streets, the People made a great noise and lamentation, crying, Alals, alals, the only Son of the Emperor is led again towards the Gallows; And as they led him the third Master named Craton, came riding upon an Hors: and as the Child saw him, he bowed down his head to him, and as though he had said have mind upon me. The people cried, saying; O good Master make haste and save your Disciple: so he smote his Horse with his Spurs, and hasted to the Palace. And when he came before the Emperor, he honourably saluted him. Who said, thy coming hither shall nothing avail thee, for I think it long until I be avenged on thee. The Master replied, I hoped at my coming to have been welcome, and to have had a better reward, and not so to be rebuked. The Emperor said, as ye have deserved, so shall it be to you. To whom he said, my Lord, what have I deserved: the Emperor said, ye right well deserve death: For I delivered you my Son well speaking, and well mannered, to be informed and taught, and ye have delivered him again unto me Dumb, and a Ribauld. To which the Master answered: in that you say he is dumb, that I commit to God; For he maketh

the dumb to speak, and deaf to hear. But in that you say, he would have informed your wife, that should I gladly know, if any creature hath seen that: for there is no malice above the malice of a woman, and that I shall prove by a good example, that a woman is full of falsehood and unknown deceit: and if you put to death your son for the words of your wife, it shall happen unto you, as it did to a Noble man and his wife, & his Pye, which he loved marvelously. To whom the Emperor said, I pray you tell me how that women are full of malice & leasings, who said I shall not shew it: but if you will first call again your Son from death, then at your pleasure I shall shew the example. Then the Emperor made his Son to be called again, and put in prison. And the Master began to tell the example in manner following.

The Example of the third Master.

There was in a City a rich Burgess that had a Pye, which he loved so well, that every day he taught her to speak Latine and Hebrew: and when he had learned her perfectly to speak these two Languages, all that she saw and heard, she shewed and told her Master.

This Young-man had a fair young wife, as ye have, the which he loved ful well, but she on the contrary loved him not, because he was not of that lascivious performance, to answer her

Lusts

and they went up both, and made a hole thorow the covering of the house, right over the Pye, and there thorow cast Sand, Clay, Stones, and Water, upon the Pye, insomuch that the poor Pye was almost dead. And on the morrow the young man went out early at the back door. When the Good-man was come home, as his custom was, he went and visited the Pye, and said to her, O Pye, my beloved Bird, tell me, how thou hast fared the while I have been out? She said Master, I will tell you tydings that I have heard: your Wife as soon as you were gone, by the night time she let a man come in, and as soon as I heard that: I told him that I should shew it you at your coming home, yet she led him into your Chamber, and slept with him all night; You ask me also how I have done in your absence, and I say to you of a truth that I was never so nigh my death, as I was that same night, with Snow, Hail, and Rain, that fell upon me so long together, that I was almost left for dead. The Wife when she heard that, said to her Husband: Sir, you believe your Pye, now you may hear what she saith, she complaineth that in the same night there fell so much Snow, Hail, and Rain upon her, that she was almost dead: and yet there was none of them that same night, for there was not in the year a clearer nor fairer night than it was: and therefore from henceforth be-

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lieth her not. Then went the good man to his Neighbor, and asked of them, if in that night were any Tempest or Rain? they answered, that some of them walked that night, and in all that night there was not seen a fairer Night. Then went he to his house and said to his wife, I have found you in a truth, for the night was very fair and clear, as I understood of your Neighbours. You may now know of a truth, said she, that the Pye is a lyar, with her leasings, she hath sown much discord betwixt us: moreover, I am defamed through the City by her false leasings. Then the Burgess went unto the Pye and said; wherefore hast thou made lyes betwixt me & my wife? is this the thanks I have for the meat that I was wont to give thee with mine own hands every day? and thou hast thereby brought my Wife into great disgrace through all the City. The pye answered God knoweth I cannot lie, for that which I saw and have heard I shewed you. Then said he, thou lyest, thou hast said unto me, that in the same night was Hail, Snow, & Rain, that thou hadst ne're hand lost thy life; which is false, and therefore from henceforth thou shalt make no more leasings nor discord betwixt me & my wife; and so took the Pye and brake her neck.

When as the Wife saw that, she was glad and said: now thou hast done well; now may we all our dayes live in rest and peace. And

when

when he had slain the Pye, he look'd up and saw in the top of his house a Ladder, & a vessel with Water, Sand, and Stones: and when he beheld that, he perceived the falshood of his wife, and cryed with a loud voice: wo to me, that for my wives words I have slain my Pye, and also my solace & joy is lost, the which in all things said to me truth. And as he had thus done anon for sorrow he left his Merchandize, and all his house, and went towards the Holy Land, and never returned home again to his wife. Then the Master said to the Empress, sir, have you understood what I have said? he answered, right well. The Master said, was not this a cursed wife, that so by her falshood, deceit, & cunning, caused the Pye to be slain, the Empress said: in troth she was full of falseness: it pitieth me greatly to think upon the pye, which for her true saying lost her life. Verily I say unto you that you have told me a very fair Example, therefore this day my Son shall not die. Then said the Master, Sir, you do wisely; & I thank you that you have spared your son this day for my sake, and so to God I commend you.

The fourth Complaint of the Empress.

When the Empress heard that the child was not dead, she made great noise, & crying in such wise, that she was heard thorow the Palace, and said; wo unto me that ever I

was

was made Empress; would to God I had died, when I was first brought into these parts. When the Emperor heard the cry that she made, he entered into the Chamber, and comforted her as much as he could, and demanded the cause of her lamentation. Who said: O mine own Lord, have you no wonder, though that I be in this sorrow and agony; for I am your wife, and in your company, by your Son I am ashamed; ye saw lately the bloody marks of his enforcement upon my tender flesh, and you have promised me, that he therefore should be hanged, and yet he liveth: wherefore should I not be sorry? the Emperor answered: be content, and I shall do justice upon my Son to morrow: I forbore him yesterday, at the moving of one of his Masters by an Example. Then said she, have you forbid to do justice for one word? were it so, yet for a word ye should not let to do justice: and ye say, for the example of one Master ye have left it. I fear me it shall happen to you & your Masters, as upon a time it fortuned unto an Emperor with his seven Wise Masters. The Emperor said, I pray you tell me that example. She said, to what intent should I labour in vain? for yesterday I shewed you a good example, and it availed not; and whatsoever I shew you for honour and profit, that the Masters of your son turn to your destruction, as in this present ex-

rample I shall clearly shew unto you. To whom the Emperor said: O my best beloved Lady, shew me that example, by the same I may beware, for though my clemency I gave one days benefit of life to my Son, I shall not therefore give him his life; for whats deferred is not forgotten. She said, gladly shall I shew it to your profit, and began to tell as followeth.

The fourth Complaint of the Empress.

SOmetimes there was in the City of Rome, seven wise Masters, by whom the Empire was governed, and the Emperor that then was, did never attempt any thing without the counsel of his Masters: whereupon they perceiving that the Emperor was so affected to them, that without them he would not obtain or many thing or die by their arts and cunning, that the Emperor should clearly see as long as he was in the Palace, but as soon as he was out, he should become blind; and so did they, that they might the more freely have the dealing themselves of al things that appertain'd to the Emperor; by which they won great profit and riches of goods: and after they had wrought the Experiment, they could never change it, nor undo it afterwards; but the Emperor was still blind many years: And the seven Masters made and proclaimed throughout the

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Empire that if any man had dreamed a dream he should come unto them with a Florent Gold or Silver, they would expound the interpretation of his Dream: whereby, and other unjust means, they obtained much mo substance and Money of the People, then the Emperor did. So upon a time, when he sat the table with his Empress he began to sigh sorrow in himself, and when she perceived that she enquired diligently of him the cause. Th Emperor said, should it not be heavy and sorrowful unto me, that I so long have been blind and cannot see out of my Palace, and yet fin no remedy? To whom spake the Empress an said: Lord hear my counsel, and it shall never repent you, if you do thereafter. In your court you have seven wise Masters, by whom ye and all the Empire is governed, if you mark, ye shall find they are the cause of your blindness: and if it be so, they are worthy to dye a most shameful death: Therefore hear my Advice, first send for them, and shew to them your Infirmity, and threaten them on their lives that they should find some speedy remedy to help you of your sickness and blindness. This Counsel pleased the Emperor well. And anon he sent for the Masters, and when they were come, the Emperor shewed unto them his Infirmity, blindness, and charged them on pain of death, that they should presently seek some remedy to

take him thereof. Then answered they: Ye desire of us a thing that is difficult to be done thus shortly, but give us respite for two days, and we will give you your full answer. The Emperor was there withall well contented Then the Seven Wise Maisters went unto Counsel, how they might restore him his sight again, and in no wise could they find the means how to put away the blindness from the Emperor: wherefore they were all right sorrowful, and said among themselves: Without we find a remedy, we are all but dead Men. So they throughout all the Empire sought if they could find any Remedy or Counsel, therefore. It hapned upon a time going through the City, in the midst thereof they found children playing, and after them came a man with a Talent or Florent of Gold, and said to them Good Maisters, this night have I dreamed a Dream, the interpretation whereof I would fain know: wherefore I pray you shew me what it signifieth, and take the Gold to you. That heard one of the children (that played amongst the other) who said unto him, give me the Gold, and I will expound you the Dream, the man said: I dreamed this night, that in the midst of mine Orchard was a great Spring of water, whereof came many small Springs, that all mine Orchard was full, and over-flown with water. The child said, take a

Spade, and dig in the same place where you thought that the water sprang out, and there shall ye find a hoard of Gold, so great, that you and your Children, and Lineage shall be forever Rich. The man did as the Child had shewed him, and found the Treasure. Then went the man to the Child, and meted him a pound weight of the Gold that he had found for the interpretation of the Dream; but he would receive none, but committed him to the Prayers of the man. The Seven Wise Masters, when they heard the Child had so wisely expounded the Dream, they said to him, good Child, What is your Name? He answered, I am called Merlin. Then said the Masters, we see surely great Wisdom in you; we shall shew you a great matter, of which we would gladly find a remedy. The Child said, shew me your matter. And they said, the Emperor of Rome, as long as he is in the Palace, hath his sight very clear, without any impediment; but as soon as he is gone out of the Palace, he cannot see. Now if you can find the cause thereof, and give present Remedy whereby he may be eased, and have his sight, ye shall have a great Reward and Honour of the Emperor. Then answered the Child, I know as well the cause of the blindness, as the remedy. Then said all unto him, come with us unto the Emperor and you shall be Rewarded so largely, that ye shall

be pleased. To whom the child said, I am ready to go with you. And when they came with the Child before the Emperor, they said unto him: Lord, lo here is the child we have brought which shal fulfil your desire, touching the cause of your blindness, and the recovery of your sight. The Emperor said: good Masters, will you take it upon you, that the Child will perform it? they all said, yea, for we are expert in his wisdom. The Emperor turned himself towards the Child, and said; will you undertake to tell me the cause of my blindness, and the remedy? the child answered, my Lord the Emperor, lead me into your bed-chamber, and there I shall shew you what is to be done; and as he was therein brought, he said to his Servants: take the cloaths from off the Bed, and all the apparel, and you shall see wonders; that done, they saw a Well smoaking that had seven Springs and Flouds; which when the Emperor saw, he marvelled greatly: the child said, ye see this Well, and without it be quenched ye shall never have your sight. The Emperor said how may that be? the child said, but one way, the Emperor said, shew us the means, and if it be possible it shall be done, that I may recover my sight as well without as within; to whom the Child said: my Lord, the seven Springs of this Well, are those seven Wise Masters, who hitherto have traiterously governed you,

and your Empire, and have made ye blind as ye be without your Palace, that they your subjects by extortion, might pile and pole, you not taeing it. But they know not the Remedy: therefore hear now my counsel, and this Well

shall be quenched and extinct: Strike off the first Masters head, and anon ye shall see the first Spring quencht, and so by order, one after another, till they are all beheaded, and anon all the Springs with the Well shall be quenched, and ye shall have your sight, as ye had before: and when this was done, the Well with the seven Springs was banished. And as the Emperor had his sight again, he made the Child a great Lord, and gave him great abundance of goods: then spake the Empress, My Lord

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have ye well perceived this Example, that I have told ye? and he said yea, in the best wise, and ye have recited a worthy & good Example. Then said she: in the same manner your seven wise Masters intend to do with you, with their false Narration, that your Son may Reign over your Empire, which God forbid.

The Declaration of the Example.

This Well is your Son, whereout floweth seven springs, that signifie the seven wise Masters: Which Son you may not destroy, without the seven wise Masters be brought to nought; that done, this Well that is your Son with all his wiles, shall not escape but let him taste of death, (which befits his shameful deserts, lest he have a help of his Masters) and after consequently the seven Masters) and so you shall govern & guide your Empire in peace and rest. The Emperor anon, commanded his Servants to lead his Son to the Gallows, which they were loath to do. Then a great multitude of people gathered with great noise and bewailing, so that the fourth Mr. named Malquidrake heard thereof, who leapt upon his Horse, and hasted to the Palace, where he met with his Disciple, and commanded him unto him: and when he came before the Emperor, and did his obeysance the Emperor said: little

thanks shall you have you old cursed Caitiff, for so ill teaching my Son. I delivered you my Son well speaking, and in all things right vertuous; but you have sent him home a fool, Dumb, and a Ribauld, for he would have lain with my Wife by force: and therefore, all ye forthwith shall be hang'd. Then said the Master, my Lord, I have not deserved so ill of you, God knoweth why your Son speaketh not, in short time you shall perceive other things, but the time is not yet come: You say, he would have oppressed your Wife, that is not truth, nor proved; neither for one single person should you judge your Son to death: if for the words of your Wife ye judge your Son to die, it shall be worse to you, then to an certain old man and his Wife, and that I shall well prove. To whom the Emperor said: I think you do with me, as sometimes Seven Wise men did to an Emperor. Whereupon said the Master; the offence of one, nor of twenty, may not sound to the rebuke of all other: but one thing of a truth I shall shew you, that evil shall come to you, if ye this day put your Son to death for the words of your Wife, of which I could shew a notable example. Then said the Emperor, Recite that. The Master said, if ye will call your Son from Death, then will I rehearse the example, or else not. The Emperor commanded he should be called again:

again: and desired the Master to say as hereafter followeth.

The Example of the fourth Master.

There was an old Knight, and a right wise man that lived long without wife or child; his Friends oftentimes exhorted him to take a Wife.

The Knight thus counselled by his friends, at last agreed unto them, and they gave him to Wife the Daughter of the Provost of Rome, that was rich and of comely feature; whom when he saw, he began to love marvellously well, and when they had been married a certain space, and had no child; in the morning it happened, that she went to the Church, where she met with her Mother, who said: My Daughter, how pleaseth you your Marriage and your husband? she said: right vile, for you have given me an old lame man, to my discontentment in all respects, and I would you had the same time buried me; for I had rather lie and eat with the swine than with him, therefore I may no longer thus endure, but I must needs love another. Then said the Mother: God forbid my dear Daughter: How long have I been with your Father, and yet never medled with such Folishness? the Daughter said: it is no marvel, for you both met in

your youth together, and the one took solace of the other, but I can of him receive no manner of corporal pleasure, for he is cold, and on the Bed he lieth as still as a stone, or as a thing immoveable. The Mother answered: if you love another, tell me what he is. The Daughter said, I will love a Priest: To whom the Mother said: it were better and less sin for you to love a Knight or a Squire: she said in short time he would be weary of me, and after do me shame. and so will not the Priest; for he will keep his own honour and counsel, as well as mine: and Spiritual men be more true to their Lovers then Secular men be. The Mother said: hear my Counsel, it will be for your good: Old folks are wily and fell; tempt your Husband first, and if you escape him without doing you harm or smiting then love a Priest. The Daughter said, I may not so long abide. the Mother said: Upon my blessing abide till you have proved. The Daughter said, upon your blessing I will abide till I have attempted: But first tell me how, I shall prove him. the Mother said, He hath in his Orchard a tree which he loveth much, cause it to be smitten down while he is a Hunting, and against his coming home, make him a fire therewith, and if he forgive you, then love the Priest. If she heard the Counsel of her Mother, she went home: to whom her Husband said, where hast

in the morning she went again to the Churchyard, and met with her Mother coming home, and they saluted each other. Then the Daughter said to the Mother: O dear Mother, I will love the Priest, for I have attempted my Lord, as you counselled me, but all for nought, for he anon forgave it, when he saw me a little weep. Then said the Mother, though old men for one time forgive, they double the pain another time; and therefore I counsel you, that you yet once again tempt him. Then said the Daughter, I may no longer abide, for I suffer so much pain for the love of the Priest, that with my tongue I cannot tell it, therefore you shall pardon me, I will no more follow your Counsel. Then said the Mother: for the love that the Child should have unto the Mother, attempt him yet once more for your Fathers blessing; and then if you go quietly without harm or beating; love the Priest in the Name of God. Then answered the Daughter, it is to me great pain so long to abide; nevertheless for the blessing of my Father, I will once more attempt him: but tell me how I shall begin. The Mother said, I understand that he hath a little Hound that he loveth well, and keepeth on his bed, cast the hound with great might (before his face) against the wall that it dye; and if you escape without a stripe, or he forgive it lightly, then in the name of God love the Priest: the

daughter

Daughter said, I will in all things do after your Counsel, for there is no Daughter living at this day, that would more gladly have the blessing of Father and Mother then I: and so she bad her Mother farewel, and went home again; and that day with great trouble of her heart, she brought to the night: and when the night was come she commanded the Bed to be covered with purple and cloath of Gold, while the Knight sate by the fire; and when the Bed was made ready, the little hound as he was accustomed, leapt upon the Bed; and she took him by the hinder-legs, & with a malicious heart she cast him against the Wall, that it lay still dead: When the good old Knight saw that, he was marvellous angry, and said with a loud voice to his Wife, O thou most cruel and spightful of all wicked Women, how could thou find in thine heart to kill that gentle Hound that I loved so much? Lord, said she, have you not seen how he with his Feet (coming out of the mire) bewrayeth our Bed that is so preciously covered with rich Cloathes. And the Knight said with much anger: know you not that I loved much better my little Hound than the Bed? When she heard that, she began pitiously to weep, and said: Wo be to me that ever I was born, for all things that I do for the best, are turned to the worst. The Knight out of the treasure of his pitty would yet

not suffering the weeping of his Wife, but for that he loved her so well, said unto her: cease your weeping, for I forgive it you altogether; and I counsel you, beware how you displease me from henceforth: and so they went to bed together.

Upon the morrow she very early went to the Church, where she met with her Mother, to whom when she had done Reverence, as it behoved, she said: Mother, now will I love the Priest, for I have attempted my Husband the second time, and all things he hath suffered. The Mother said, O my dear Daughter; there's no cruelty or falshood above the cruelty of old Folks, and therefore once more proves him. To whom the daughter answered: Mother, ye labour in vain; for if you wist what, and how much pain I suffer for the Priests love, ye should help me if you love me. The Mother said, hear me Daughter this time, and I shall never let you more: think how you have sucked Milk out of my Breasts, and the great pain I suffered at your Birth, by these pains, my dear Daughter, I charge you, deny not this good Petition, and I promise you no more to let you, nor hinder you of your content but rather to help you. Then answered the Daughter, it is to my great pain to abstain so long from the love of the Priest: nevertheless for the great charge you have laid to me, & for

that

that ye have made a Vow no more to let me, but to further me: Tell me how I might attempt him, and I shall once more adventure. The Mother said, I know on Sunday next he intendeth to have us all to Dinner, your Father, and I and all your Friends, with all the rest of the City, and when you are set in your place, and all the Meats are brought & served upon the Table, fasten your Keys privily, that hang at your girdle, in the Table-cloth, and then feign to have forgotten your Knife, & say these words openly; See what a short wit I am off, I have forgotten my Knife in my Chamber! And then rise up hastily, and go, and the Cloth with all the Meats you shall overthrow upon the ground, and if you escape without pain, I make a vow to God, I shall never let you after. The Daughter said, that shall I gladly do, and so took her leave and departed. The Feast day came, & all (as the Mother said) was bid: The servant covered the Table, all are set, and the Daughter sate over against her Lord, and when the Table was well served with Meats. and other things belonging, the Lady of the House said with a loud voice: See how forgetful I am; I have left my Knife in my Chamber, which I must fetch: And so rose up hastily, and drew the Cloath with all the Meat upon it with her, with all the Gold Vessels, and the Salts fell upon the ground. The Knight

wared sore angry in heart, but dissembled before the Guests, & commanded another Cloath and other Meats to be brought; and with joy saluted his Guests to eat and make good chear, so that they were all merry. The Feast, or Dinner done, they all gave thanks to the Knight, and took their leaves, every man towards his own house. Upon the next day, in the morning the Knight rose early, and went to the Church to here Service; after which he went to the Barber, and said unto him, Sir, are you expert in blood-letting, in what vein I will desire you? and he said Sir, I am expert in what Vein you can name in a mans Body. The Knight said, I am content: come with me. And when he was come into the house, he entred his Chamber where his wife lay in bed, and said unto her: rise up quickly. Then said she, what shall I do up so early? it is not nine of the Clock? the Knight said, you must rise up, for you must be letten Blood in both your Arms. She said, I was never letten blood and shall I now bleed? then said the Knight, that is truth, and therefore you are a Fool: Remember, first, Ye hewed down my Tree, another time you killed my little Hound, and but yesterday, you shamed me before all my Friends and Parents. If I should suffer you thus for to go on, you would for ever shame me. The cause hereof I consider, you

have

have evil and wild blood within your body, and therefore I will that the corrupt blood be drawn out, that ye from henceforth shall put me to no more shame and anger: So caused to be made a great fire; and she stood and cryed, and held up her hands towards heaven, and said, My Lord, forgive my trespass, and have pitty on me at this time, and I will never more offend you. The Knight said, Pray for no mercy; for the mercy that God hath wrought towards thee at this present, is this, that except thou holdest thine arm straight, I shall soon have thy hearts blood; and said to the Barber, smite hard, and make a deep hole in her arm, or I shall give you a great stripe; then smote the Barber so sore, that the blood came abundantly out, and the Knight would not suffer him to stanch it, until the time that she changed her colour in her visage; and as this was done, he bad it to be stopped; and willed the Barber to smite the vein upon the other arm: Then she cryed, with a very loud voice, My sweet Husband, I pray have compassion on me, for now I dye. The Knight answered, Wife, you should have thought on this before, e're you had done to me these three despights. Then she held out her left arm, and the Barber smote thereon a great hole, that the blood came out right ugly; and he suffered her to bleed till her visage was changed, and she swounded: Then said the

Knight

Knight: now unbind her Arm, and stench it, and said unto her; Now go to bed and study, and think hencefoorth to amend your life, or I shall draw the blood of your heart. As this was done, he gave the Barber his Reward, and he went again to his own house: and his Wife being under the hands of her Maids almost dead, was led to her bed: she made one of her Maidens go to her Mother in haste, and say, That I desire her to come and speak with me before I die: the Mother when she heard that, was glad of the correction of her Daughter, and came hastily to her: When the Daughter heard her Mother, she said: O my sweet Mother, I am almost dead, for I have bled so much, that I believe I shall not escape death. Then answered the Mother: said I not that old men are right cruel; will you now love the Priest? she said. The Devil may the Priest confound, I will never love other but my husband. Then said the Master to the Emperor: Lord have you understood me: he answered right well; for amongst all I have heard, this was the best example. Three evil deeds she did to her husband: and I doubt not, if she had done the fourth, she would have shamed him for ever. Then said the Masters therefore I counsel you, that you beware of your Wife, lest, it happen worse to you, which appears manifestly in this Example, if you put to death your only Son for her words.

you shall be deceived in the end, and for ever shall repent it. The Emperor said: truly Master this day my son shall not die. The Mother said, my Lord, I thank you, that ye for my sake this day have spared your only Son.

The fifth Example of the Empress.

The Empress hearing the Child was not dead, forthwith apparrelled her self, and caused the Wains to be in readiness, as though she would have gone unto her own Countrey to her Father, to complain of the great shame was done her, and yet could have no Remedy. The Servants seeing that, shewed to the Emperor that the Empress was going into her Countrey; when he perceived that, he went to her, saying, whither are you going? I hoped you had loved me so that in all the World you would have sought no solace but with me. To which she said: that is true, and therefore I go from you, for I had rather hear of your death then see you die: you delight so much to hear these Matters, that it shall happen to you, as it did to Octavian the Emperor, the which was so covetous, that the Noblemen of the Empire buried him quick, and filled his mouth full of molten gold. The Emperor said: dear Wife do not so, that the blame on you and me be not laid; then said the Empress: truly Sir, the blame is yours; for have you not promised me

many

many times your Son shall die yet he liveth, therefore I will no more believe you; then said the Emperor, it becometh not a King every cause lightly to discuss without great advice, especially upon his son, on whom it is not meet, but upon deliberation and good counsel to pass judgement: therefore I pray you tell me somewhat by which I may govern my life, for it is the destruction of a King, without advice, and undiscreetly to give judgement. She answered I will gladly tell you a notable example, so that henceforth you will not be desirous to hear the Masters, and began in this form following:

The fifth Example of the Empress.

OCtavanius the Emperor reigned in Rome, right, Rich, and Covetous, and above all things he loved Gold. The Citizens of Rome at that time did much harm, and many great outrages to other Nations, insomuch that divers Regions were moved against the Romans. In that time was Master Virgilius, the which excelled in Magick and other Sciences all other Masters: the Citizens prayed him that he by his Art would devise how they of their enemies might have warning beforehand, whereby they might provide for themselves the better. He made by his cunning a Tower, and on the Tower did cause to be set as many Images, as in all the world were

Regions and Provinces, and in the midst of the Tower and Image, which held in his hand an Apple, or a great round ball of Gold. And every Image of the Tower held in his hand a little Bell, and stood turning and loking towards his own Province to him assigned: and as often as any Province would rebel against the Romans, so often turned he to the Images of the Land, and rung the Bell; that hearing, the Citizens of Rome armed themselves, and to that Province hasted with all their might the same to subdue: so there was no Land so great that could wreak them upon the Romans, and therefore were they feared over all the world. Also that Master Virgil made for the comfort of the poor people a light that always burned; and by that light he made two Bathes, the one of them hot, in which the poor people might bath and wash themselves: and the other cold, in which they might themselves refresh. Betwixt the Light and the Bathes, he made an Image, standing, in whose Fore-head was written, He that smiteth me, shall anon have vengeance. The Image stood there many years, and at last come a Clerk and beheld the Image and read the writing, and thought in himself, what vengeance he might find therefore: I do believe better, if any man smite thee, and thou fallest therewith to the earth, he shall find some treasure under thy

thy feet; and therefore in the Writing, that no Man should have it. And the Clerk lift up his hand and gave th' Image a great stroke, that it fell to the ground: and anon the Light was out, and the Bathes were vanished away, and he found no Treasure. The poor Folks perceiving that, were all sorrowful, and laid their Curses and complaints upon him, that for his singular Covetousness had destroyed the Image, and robbed them of so great a Solace. Hereafter assembled three Kings, which by the Romans had suffered great wrongs, and went to take Counsel how they might be avenged of the Romans, and some of them said: we labour in vain, for as long as there standeth the Tower with the Images, we cannot do any thing against them.

At the Counsel arose four Knights, and said: we have thought on a remedy how to destroy the Tower with the Images, and that to do, we will lay our lives to pledge, if you will be at the cost. Then answered the Kings: what cost shall we be at? they answered: Four Tun of Gold. Then said the Kings; take the Gold, and fulfill your promise. The Knights took the Gold, and went towards Rome: And when they came thither in the night, without one of the Gates, in the Ditch full of Water, they drowned one of the Tuns with the Gold in it, and another Tun they drowned by the

second gate, and the third tun they drowned by the third gate, and the fourth tun by the fourth Gate, and when they had thus done, early in the morning they entered into the City at an hour convenient: and as the Emperor went over to the Market, they did him reverence. The Emperor seeing them, demanded from whence they were, of what Science, and what service they could do: They answered: We are all of far Countries, and South-sayers so perfect, that there is never a thing so privily hid, but we shall find it out by our Dreams. We have heard that ye labour and have pleasure in such things, and therefore we come unto you, to know if you had need of our service: the Emperor said, I will prove you; and if it be so, that I find you true. You shall have of me great rewards and thanks. They said, we ask nothing but the half of the Gold which by us shall be found: The Emperor said, I am well content. And thus they had with the Emperor many words. At night when the Emperor was going to bed they said unto him, My Lord, if it please you this night shall the eldest of us set his Cunning a work and Dream: The third day he shall shew you his Dream. And what it signifieth. The Emperor said: Go in Gods Name. And they went forth with great gladness: And this night they passed with great joy and mirth, upon trust they should come to a

good

good purpose. When the third day was come, they went early to the Emperor; the first said: my Lord, please you to go with us without one of the gates of the City, and I will shew where there is an tun full of Gold hid; the Emperor said, I shall go with you and see if it be true that you say. And when they were come to the place they drew out the tun, that they before there had put; the Emperor when he saw that was glad, and gave them their part; then said the second Dreamer: my Lord, this night shall I Dream; then the Emperor said, God give you a good dream, the next night came, and he took out the other tun and gave it the Emperor, and took also his share. In the like manner the third and the fourth; upon which the Emperor was out of all measure joyous, and said; he had not seen such true and expert South-sayers, as dreamers as they were. Then said they all of them together, as it had been out of one mouth: my Lord we have all one after another, Dreamed, the which as you have seen, they be all proved: but now if it please you that we dream altogether this night, we trust that to us shall be shewed, that we shall find a great quantity of Gold and Riches; the Emperor said: God give you a good Dream, which to me and you may be profitable. On the next morrow they came again unto the Emperor, and said unto

him with countenance full of joy: my Lord, we bring good and profitable tidings, for this night in our sleeps, so great a Treasure is to us shewed, the which if you will suffer it to be sought, you shall be so enriched, that in this world shall be none like unto you. The Emperor said: Where shall we find this Treasure? they said: under the foundation of the Tower that the Images stand upon. The Emperor answered: God defend I should for love of Gold destroy the Tower with the Images, wherewith we from our Enimies be defended and warned. They said to him again, my Lord have you found us in our sayings otherwise then true? the Emperor said, Nay. Oh Lord (said they) we with our own hands shall give out the Gold, without hurting the Tower, or the Images. And it is expedient (that secretly in the night) by us it be done, for dread of resort and concourse of the people, least that it should run in the clamour of them, and they they take that good gold away from you and us. The Emperor said: go in the name of God, and do your best as you will, or can, and I shall to morrow early come to you. Then went they with gladness, and in the night were let into the Tower, and then with great haste and diligence they under-minded it, and on the next day, very early in the morning, mounted upon their Horses, and rode again towards their

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own Country with joy and glory, and e're they came without the sight of Rome, the Tower fell down on the morning ensuing. When it was fallen, and the Senators it perceived, they sorrowed greatly, and there was a great bewailing throughout all the City, and they went unto the Emperor and said: Lord, how may it be that this Tower is thus fallen, by the which we have always had warning afore of our enemies? he answered and said, to me came four false deceivers, and feigned themselves to be South-sayers, and that they could find treasure in the Ground: and said, that under the foundation of the Tower was hidden an innumerable sum of gold, the which they should undermine without hurting the Tower and Images: I gave faith to them, and they have deceived me. They answered: ye have coveted so much gold, that for your unsatiate covetousness we shall all be destroyed: but first your covetousness shall fall upon your self. Then they took him, and led him to the Capitoal and laid him on his back, and poured his mouth full of molten Gold, saying to him; you have desired Gold, and therefore ye shall drink Gold: and after that they buried him quick. Not long after that came the Enemy against the Romans, and overcome and destroyed them all.

Then said the Empress unto the Emperor,

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have ye my Lord, this example well understood? and he said, right well; then said she, the Tower with Images is your Body with five wits: as long as you live, there is none so hardy to trouble, or make war upon you, nor upon your people, that hath your Son right well understood, and doth with the seven Masters, and their false Narration or Fables seek how they might destroy you; for you are overmuch covetous to incline to them, insomuch that they shall undermine you and call you underfoot: and bring you to nought; the Images are your five wits that be all lost. And for as much as you be foolish, they shall destroy you, and your son shall obtain your Empire.

The Emperor said, ye have recited a good example; wherefore it shall not happen to me as to the Tower, but my Son first this day shall taste the bitterness of death; to whom the Empress said: if ye do so, ye shall speed well and live long. Upon the same day he commanded his Son to be led to hanging; and as he was led towards the Gallows, came riding against him upon a Horse, the fifth Master towards the Palace who came before the Emperor, and saluted him with all reverence; but he despised his salutation, and put him in fear of his life. The Master said unto the Emperor: my Lord; I have not deserved for to dye; and to despise my salutation, it is not for your Hon-

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nour: for your Son hath not with us been of such condition, as ye repute him, as ye in short time shall find: and that he speaketh not, is of his great wisdom: and know ye, that he shall well speak as his time cometh, though he now speaketh not, as you in short time shall hear. But that he would have shamed your wife, believe not; for so wise a Man as he is, would never attempt so shameful a deed: and if you put him to death for your wives words, ye shall not escape without shame and vengeance, like as Ippocras, escaped not without vengeance, for the death of Galienus his Cousin. The Emperor said, that would I fain hear and understand; then said the Master: what would it avail me to tell you this narration for your profit, if in the mean season your son shall die? wherefore if you will call again your son, it shall be discovered at your pleasure, after do as you think best; the Emperor bad call again his son, and set him in prison, and then began the Master to tell on the manner: as followeth.

The Example of the fifth Master.

SOmetimes there was a famous Physitian named Ippocras right cunning, who excelled all others in Learning and Science: He had with him his Nephew Galienus, the which he loved so much: This Galienus

nus was of excellent wit, and applied all his mind and wit, to learn of his uncle the Science of Physick. When Ippocras perceived that, in so much as he could, he hid from him his cunning, fearing he should excel him in that knowledge, for the great wit he was of.

As Gallienus saw this, he studied & exercised insomuch that in short time he had perfect cunning in Physick, for the which Ippocras envyed him much. It happened upon a time thereafter, that the King of Hungary sent his Messenger unto Ippocras, that he should come unto him for to cure his Son. Ippocras excused himself, and sent his Cousin Gallienus with Letters of excuse for his not coming. When Gallienus was come before the King, he was wor-

worshipfully received; and they marvelled Ippocras would not come. He excused him, saying that he had many great things to do; and he might not come, but hath sent me in his stead; and with the help of God I shall make whole the Child: that pleased very well the King. Gallineus went to the Child, and when he had seen the Urine, and touched his Pulses, he said to the Queen: O excellent Princes, I pray you hear and suffer my words, and tell me who is the Father of the Child; she said, who should be the Father, but my Lord the King; Gallineus said, I am sure he is not the Father: she answered, if you will say that for a truth, I shall cause your head to be smote off; he answered, I say once again, that this King is not the Father, and I am not come hither to lose my head, for I have not deserved any such reward, and was going his way: the Queen spake, O good Master Gallienus, if ye will keep it secret, & not discover me, I shall open unto you my heart. The Master said: God defend that from me, that I to any person should shew it: and therefore, O noble Queen, shew it boldly to me, for it shall never pass my mouth, and I shall make your son whole. She said, if you do that, ye shall have a good reward, hear therefore what I shall say: By fortune came hither unto my Lord the King of Burgandy, and he was so long com-

conversant with me, that this child by him I bare. Then said the Master, fear not, I know it was so before. And anon he gave the child Medicines, and compounded things, whereof to eat and drink, and the child was eased of his infirmity. And when the King heard that the child was recovered of his sickness, he gave unto the Master a good reward: but of the Queen he secretly received a great gift, and special thanks, and so went his way. And when he was come home, Ippocras his Master demanded of him: saying, have ye beheld the Child? and he said, yea, then asked he him what he gave him, either compounds or uncompounded things: then said Ippocras, that Mother of the Child is not true to her Husband, that is truth said Galienus, then Ippocras was moved with envy, and thought in himself, if there be not found a Remedy, my Sciences shall no more be set by, but he shall be praised above me. And from that day forward he devised how he might slay him. Upon a day Ippocras called him, and said: come go with me to seek and gather Herbs in the Garden; to whom he said: Master, I am ready; and when they were come into the Garden, Ippocras said: I see that this Herb is right vertuous, stoop down and gather me of it. And Galienus did so; and as they went about the Garden, said Ippocras: Now I well perceive

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the Odour of this Herb, that is more precious then gold; and therefore stoop down to the ground and draw it out with the Root; for it is much worth. Galienus bowed down himself to pull out the Herb, and Ippocras drew out his knife and killed him. After that Ippocras fell sick to the death; that the strength of his body failed him; and did as much as he could to help himself, but that could not be; and as the Scholars and Disciples heard of it, they went hastily unto him, and did all they might or could for profit of his health; but it availeth them nothing.

When Ippocras this perceived, he said unto his Scholars: fetch me a great tun, and fill it full to the brim with Water: and when they had so done, he said unto them: make now therein an hundred holes: and when that was also done, there went none of the Water out; then said Ippocras: Behold my most dear Disciples, how the vengeance of God is fallen upon me, as you may openly see; for in this tun are an hundred holes, and yet goeth not there out any drop: Right so there cometh no vertue out of the Herbs to help me, and therefore what you do unto me, helpeth not; for I must die: But my dear Children, if my Nephew Galienus were alive, he could heal me, whom I have slain, and that grieveth me sore, and therefore the vengeance of God cometh

upon

upon me: and this said, he turned to the wall and gave up the Ghost. Then said the Master unto the Emperor: my Lord, understand ye well what I have said; he answered: yea, right well: what hurt had it been to him if Gallienus had lived.

The Master answered: it had been better for Ippocras at that time, had not he dyed, and therefore by the right wise judgement of God, his Medicines availed him not, and therefore I shewed to you that it shall happen worse to you, if that you put to death your son for the Words of your wife, who in time of necessity shall ease and succour you. And consider ye not, that ye have after the first wife, wedded this wife that ye now have: and so ye may the third, and fourth, and never shall ye have such a Son, that shall save you from peril. The Emperor said, truly he shall not die.

Then said the Master, then do you that becomes the wisdome of your years, and the Royalty of your Person; and I commend you to God, and I thank ye that you have this day for me spared your Son. The Emperor said, I mark this well, that women are very crafty, therefore I will not for you, but for my self spare him.

The sixth Complaint of the Empress.

When the Empress had knowledge thereof, she shewed her self so impatient that all that saw her, or heard her, wondred, and said to the Emperor: your Wife pineth as though she would shortly dye. The Emperor hearing thereof, went to her, and said, wherefore (good Lady) be ye so impatient? she answered, saying, O Lord, how should I hold it in, when I am the only Daughter of a King, and your Wife, and in your Company I have had great despite, and you have promised to punish him, but performe it not: the Emperor said I wot not what to do, ye labour to have my Son put to death, and the Masters labour to save his life; and amongst these, I know he is my Son. But where the truth is, that I know not. Then said she, this is the cause whereof I complain, that ye believe the Masters more than me; and therefore it shall happen to you, as it did to a King and his Steward.

Then said the Emperor, tell me that example, peradventure it may move me sooner to put my Son to death, she said gladly, but I pray give attention to what I say: and began as ensueth.

The ſixth Example of the Empreſs.

THere was a King moſt proud and deſpiſed in his Uiſage, ſo that all Women hated him. The King thought to deſtroy all Rome, and carry away the bodies of Peter and Paul: Who while he was in the mind, called his Steward, that was ſecretly with him of his Priuy Councel, and ſaid unto him go ſeek a fair woman that this night may ſléep with me. The Steward anſwered: my Lord, ye know your infirmity, and no Woman will do evil without a great ſum of money. The King ſaid, think you for my money I will want one? have I not Gold and ſilver enough? though it were a thouſand Florents, I would it give.

The

a Steward hearing that, was smitten with Covetousness, and went to his wife, which was fair, chast, and of good kindred, and said to her O my good Wife, my Lord delireth to sleep with a vertuous Woman, and will not forbear it, though she ask a thousand Florents, and hath commanded me for to provide him one. Therefore I counsel you, that you get that Money. The wife said, were it so, that the King were not so proud, and foul of Visage, yet would I not consent, for the sin against God. The Steward said, I command you, and promise you, that without ye consent herein, ye shall never have a good day with me: she hearing that, trembled, insomuch that for fear, she consented unto him.

The Steward then went to the King, and said, Sir, I have found a fair Woman, and she is come of a very good House, which will not have less then a thousand Florents: in the evening she shall come, and early in the morning must go away, that she be not seen. The King answered, I am contented. When night was come, the Steward led his Wife to the Kings Bed, made fast the Door, and went his way. Early in the morning the Steward arose and went unto the King, and said, my Lord, it will be day within a while, it is good you perform your promise, and let the Woman go. The King said: This Woman pleaseth me

a wel that so soon she should not depart. When he had so that, he departed all sorry, and tarried a while, and came to the King again, and said; my Lord, the morning is come, therefore let the Woman go, and as I promised her, lest she be ashamed. The King said, yet shall she not go; therefore go out, and shut the Door. The Steward right sorrowful departed, and went up and down with an heavy heart till the clear day appeared: then he entred again into the Chamber, and said, my Lord, it is clear day, suffer the Woman to depart that she be not ashamed. The King answered, I say she shall not yet depart, for her company is to me well pleasing. The Steward hearing that, could no longer forbear to hold his own councel, but said, Oh my good Lord, I beseech you suffer her to depart, for it is mine own Wife. The King hearing that, said to him, open the Window; and when it was open the bright day appeared, and he beheld the Woman fair, and perceived it was the Wife of the Steward, and said, O thou stain of Manhood, and shame of the Creation, why hast thou for so little money shamed thy good Wife, and delivered her to me unwitting: therefore hast thee, and get thee out of my Realm, and never come in my sight; for if ever I see thee, thou shalt dy the most shameful death that can be imagined. When the Steward heard

that

that he fled, and durst not abide, and never more came into the Realm. And the King kept that Wife all his life time in great honour, and gave her plenty of all things that to her appertained.

After that the King caused to be assembled a mighty Army of Puissant Men of War, and went to the City of Rome with great might, and besieged it on all sides, until the Romans would have delivered to him (for to have withdrawn himself from thence) the bodies of the Holy Apostles, St. Peter and Paul.

Then there was in the City, Seven wise Masters, as ye have now, by the Counsel of whom all the City was governed. And the Citizens came unto them, and said: what shall we do? it behoves us, that we gave unto our enemies the Bodies of the Holy Apostles, of the City. Then answered the first Master, I shall with my wisdom this day save the City and the Bodies of the Apostles. And so every one of them for one day promised to do the like, in like manner as your Masters have promised your Son. With that the King began to assault the City in all parts. Then began the first Master to alleadge so wisely to have Peace, that the King that day left his assault and withdrew a little from the City: and so did all the Masters one after another, till the last. Unto whom came the Burgesses of

the City, and said, O Master, ye shall understand, that the King hath sworn, that to morrow with all his strength, he will win the City, or we must be all in jeopardy to lose our lives: Therefore acquitting your Promise, defend us from danger, like as your fellows before you have done. Then answered the Master: Fear not, for to Morrow, I shall by my cunning, shew such an operation, that the King and all his might shall leave the siege. The next day the King gave a great assault to the City; then went the Master and cloathed himself in a marvelous strange Vesture, having therein the Feathers of Peacocks, and other Flowers of divers colours, and took two bright Swords in each hand one, and went therewith and stood upon the highest Tower of the City, and began to move and turn, and shew himself towards the host, so that they might all behold him; and he held in his Mouth the two bright Swords that marvelously shined. They without, the Kings Hosts beholding that, said unto him, O King, behold on the top of yonder Tower a wonderful thing, Yea, (quoth he) I see it right well, it is Marvelous: but what it is I know not. They said, it is the God of Christian Folk, that is come out of Heaven to slay us with two swords if we longer abide. The King hearing that, Trembled for fear, and said, What shall we do? There is but

one

ans way, and that is, that we depart from hence, least their God avenge himself upon us. Then began the King with his Host to flie: Notwithstanding there was no need, for they of the Master was deceived. When the Romans saw that, they hastily persued them, well armed, and slew the king with many of the people, and in that manner (by great subtility of the Masters was the mighty King with his Army subdued. Then said the Empress unto the Emperor, Lord, have you understood what I have said; he said, Ye with with good attention. She said, now ye have heard what I said unto you, at the beginning of this Naration of the Steward that the King trusted so much, which for covetousness shamed his own Wife, and for that was banished out of the Land: in like manner your Son, for the desire he hath to the Empire, intendeth to destroy you: but whil'st he is in your power, do with him as the King did with his Steward. If you will not put him to death, then put him out of your Empire, that you may live in safegard of your life. And have you also heard how the King lay before Rome, and how he was by the Wise Masters deceived, and he with his followers were slain? in like manner the Seven Wise Masters intend to deal with you, and with crafty Wiles deceive you, and in the end traytorously murther you, that so your Son might

Reign in your Empire. Whereupon answered the Emperor: that shall not be, for to morrow my Son shall dye. Then he commanded his servants forthwith to lead his Son to execution. When the people heard these things, they gathered in great troops, much lamenting the death of the Emperors Son. And as soon as the sixth Master had heard thereof, he hasted to the Emperors Court, and saluted him with reverence; but he disdainfully threatned him that he should be put to death with his Son, for he was with them made dumb and a Ribauld, which was shewed towards his Wife. The Master replyed, I have not deserved to die with your Son, but to have large gifts; for he is not dumb, as you shall hear within three days, if he may live so long; but if you put him to death for the words of your Wife, then I shall marvel at your Wisdom, and without doubt it shall happen to you, as sometimes it hapned to a Knight that so much allowed the saying of his Wife, that he was bound to an horse-tail, and drawn threw the City to the Gallows. The Emperor said, for the love of God shew me that example, that I may beware of that evil. That I will not do, said the Master, without you call again your Son. Then he commanded to call back his Son: and the Master began as followeth.

The Example of the sixth Master.

SOmetimes there was an Emperor of Rome which had three Knights, whome he loved above all others, in the same City there was an antient Knight that had wedded a fair young Wife, which above all things he loved, as you do the Empress: the Lady could sing with such swetnes, that many desired her company. It befell on a season as she sate in the House, her Visage turned to the street, that she might see them that walk'd by, and began swetly to sing, that all folks delighted to hear her. By chance came that ways a Knight of the Emperors Court, that heard her voice, and beholding her with a willing mind, and attentive ear, he was exceedingly taken in Love: and entring the House, fell into talk with her greatly, but chiefly of Love, and amongst other talk he demanded of her, what he should give her to sleep by her side one night? She answered, one hundred Florents. Then said the Knight, tell me when I shall come, and I shall give it you. Sir quoth she, when I have convenient time, I shall send for you. The next day she sung in the same place, and the second Knight of the Emperors Court came by that way, who likewise was smitten in her love, and he also promised her an hundred Florents: to whom she made the like promise. The third day came to her another Knight, and unto him she likewise consented

and

and he promised her an hundred florents, if she should give him knowledge of the time; which she also promised. These three Knights having so secretly spoken with the Lady, that not one of them had knowledge of one anothers coming unto her. Now the Lady was deceitful, and came to her husband, and said: Sir, I have a secret matter to shew you, wherein if you follow my counsel, our poverty you may largely relieve. The Knight replyed, tell it me, and I will keep it as secret as my life, and fulfil it to the uttermost of my power. She answered, three Knights of the Emperors Court have been with me, one after another, in such wise, that none of them knoweth of anothers counsel, and each Knight offered me an hundred florents. Might we three hundred florents get, and no man know it, should not our poverty be well relieved? then said the Knight, yes: therefore whatsoever you shall counsel me, I shall willingly perform: then said she, I give you counsel, that when the Knights shall come with their florents, you shall stand behind the Gate with your sword drawn, and as they come (being they come one after another) you shall slay them, and so we shall have the three hundred florents they bring, without any mans knowledge. The Knight answered, O my best beloved wife, I fear this evil cannot be hid, and we shall therefore suffer death if it were known:

She

she answered, I shall this work begin, and therefore make a good end, fear not. When the Knight saw she was so hardy, it causeth him to be more bold: then she sent for the first Knight, and he came without tarrying to the Gate, and knocked, and she asked if he had brought the hundred Florents? he answered, I have brought them. Then she let him in, and he had no sooner entred but her husband murthered him. Immediately came the second Knight, and in like manner was slain. And not long after came the third Knight, whom also he slew. Having finish'd the butchery, they conveyed the murthered bodies into a secret Chamber. When they had thus done, the Knight said unto the Lady, O dear Wife, if these dead bodies should be found with us, we shall dye the most shameful death that can be imagined, for it is not possible but these three Knights will be missed in the Emperors Court, and great search will be made for them throughout the City. She Answered and said, Sir Knight, I have now this Work begun, and will make a good end, fear not, as I have said. This Lady had a Brother which had the Government of the Wealth of the City, that on night watched in the Streets with his Fellows: she stood at the Gate, and called unto her Brother, and said, O my best beloved Brother, I have a secret matter, which

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I would not make known, therefor come in with me, and I will relate it unto you. And when he was entred the house, the Lady received him friendly, and gave him Wine, and said, my beloved brother, this is the cause I have called you, for I have much need of your good Counsel. The Brother answered, speak boldly, and whatsoever I may do, to my power, shall be at your desire, without any letting. Then said she, yesterday came a Knight in friendship, but afterwards he fell into such variance with my Husband, that he slew him: and he lieth here dead in my Chamber: now my dear Brother. We have no Man that we may trust, but only you: and if this dead Body be found in our House, we shall be put to Death. Now she mentioned but one. Her Brother said: deliver him me in a Sack, and I will bear him to the Sea: she hearing that, was glad thereof, and delivered him the Body of the first Knight, he took it, and went a good space, and cast him therein: and as soon as this was done, he came to his Sister, and said to her: Give me of the best Wine, for you are of him quit: and she gave him thanks, and went to her Chamber, as though she had gone for Wine, and began to cry aloud: The Knight that was cast into the Sea, is come again. As her Brother heard that, he marvelled sore, and said: Give me

him

him, I shall see if he will rise again, and took the second Knight (supposing it had been the body of the first) and went to the Sea, and with a stone drowned him. That done, he went again to his Sister, and said, now fill me a Cup of good Wine, for I have drowned him deep, that he shall never come again. Then said she, thanks be to God; and went again to her Chamber, and feigned to fetch Wine, and cryed aloud, Alas he is risen again, and is come out of the Sea! And as her Brother heard that, with a great marvel, he said, what Devil is this that I have cast into the Water, and yet he is come again, deliver him me the third time, and I shall see if he will come again. Then she gave him the third Knight, which he believed had been the first, and went without the City to a great Forrest, and mad a great fire to cast him therein, and when he was almost burnt, the Brother went a little difference to do his need. Then came a Knight that was to ride to the City, where in the morning should be a Turney and Justing: it was cold weather, and dark and not far from the City, and when he saw the fire, he drew thereto, and alighted and warmed him.

The Watch-man came and said, what art thou? the Knight said, I am a Knight. Then said the Watch-man thou art no Knight, but a Devil, for I first cast thee into the Water, then

then with a great stone I drowned thee, and the third time I put thee in this fire, supposing thou hadst been burnt; and yet thou standest here: And then he took the Knight with his Horse, and cast them both into the fire. After that he went unto his Sister, and told, what had happened; and said now bring me the best Wine; for after I had burnt him, I found him again by the fire, with a Horse, and had cast them both into the fire: and by this his Sister perceived he had burnt a Knight of the Tourney: who anon brought him the Wine abundantly; and after he had well drunk, he departed thence. Not long after, there fell a great Contention betwixt the Knight and his Wife, so that he smote her; and she had indignation thereof, being angry, and said, that many heard her: O wretch wilt thou kill me, as thou did'st the three Knights: certain men hearing that, laid hands on them, and brought them to the Emperor; and the Woman confessed that her Husband had slain three Knights of the Emperors; and how he took from them three hundred Florents. And it being so found, both were drawn at a Horse-tail and hanged. Then said the Master to the Emperor: have you understood what I have said? he answered, right well: I say for certain, that Wife was the worst Woman that might be; for first she moved him to murther, and afterwards discovered

him

him. The Master said: without doubt it shall happen to you wrongs, if you put your Son to death by advice of your wife. The Emperor said, my Son shall not dis this day. The Master hearing that, gave thanks to the Emperor, and took leave, and went his way.

The seventh Complaint of the Empress.

When the Empress heard the Emperors Son was yet living, as a mad woman, she ran to the Emperor weeping; and saying. Oh unhappy woman! what shall I do? I must needs slay my self that am so ashamed, and no punishment thereupon done. The Emperor answered: God defend that you should have mind on such a wicked deed; suffer a while, and you shall have a good end. She answered, Sir, the end shall be evil; for of that, shall follow us great confusion. The Emperor said. leave off such talk. She said, Lord, it shall come to you and your Son, as to a King and his Steward I pray tell me that example. She said, I will gladly, but I fear you will hear me in maze. For next day the seventh Master shall speak, and save your Son from death as the other six have done, and then your Son shall speak, of whose words you shall have such joy and delectation, that the love betwixt us shall be wholly forgotten. The Emperor said, that is impossible, for I shall never forget your love.

Then

Then said she, my best beloved Lord, if it please you, I will tell you one example, by which you shall beware of many Perils, especially of your accursed Son, who intendeth to destroy me by his Masters. The Emperor said, tell on. And the Empress began to tell as hereafter followeth.

The seventh Example of the Empress.

There was a King which loved his Wife above all things, insomuch that he closed her within a strong Castle, and bare the Keys thereof himself: the Lady was therefor heavy and comfortless. Now in far Countries there was a valiant Knight, which lying on his Bed dreamed he saw one of the fairest Queens that ever

ever eye beheld, whose love above all others he desired to obtain, and if he might see her walk, he should certainly have some knowledge of her, by whom to him great friendship and honour should come. To the Queen the same Night, by vision of the same Knight, the like was also shewed, and as yet they had no knowledge of each other, neither of Name or Fame. When the Knight had thus dreamed, and seen (as he thought) a most vertuous and comely Lady, he determined that his foot should take no rest, till he had found out the Lady, that in his Dream seemed so glorious: And having took Horse, and all that was necessary for his journey, he travelled throughout divers Regions, Countries, and Kingdoms, till at last he came into the Land, where this Queen was by her jealous Husband kept in a strong Castle. When this Knight was come unto the City, and had for a season therein sojourned, it fell out, that as the Knight walked by the Castle, (and knew not as then, that the Queen was therein kept) she was at that time sitting in a Window to see the people pass by, and amongst others, she espied the Knight, and knew him to be the Man of whom she had dreamed before: The Knight by chance lifted up his eyes, and perceived the Lady in the Window, and his mind gave him that it was she of whom he had dreamed. and she began a Song in Love. As he heard that,

he was taken with her Love. That Knight from henceforth daily walked about the Castle, beholding it all over, to espy if any way he might get in, to declare his mind unto her. The Lady perceiving that, presently indited a Letter, and secretly conveighed it unto him from the Casement of her Chamber Window, which when he had perused, and understanding the will of the Lady, he began to haunt Justs and Turnaments, and did perform so many marvellous Acts, that the Fame of him came to the ears of the King. And as soon as the King heard thereof, he sent after him, and said unto him: Sir Knight I have heard that you have got much honour at our Justs and Turnaments: wherefore if it please you to abide here and dwell with us, we shall give you large rewards. The Knight answered: O mighty Prince, I am your servant, would I could do any service that would please your Magnificence, without taking any rewards, save one thing before all other I desire. The King said: shew unto me boldly what that is. The Knight answered: My Lord, saving that it hath pleased your most excellent Majesty to take me for your Servant, and on of your Grave Counsel, it seemeth to be most expedient for both our delights that I have a place nigh the Wall of the Castle, that I at all times might be more ready at your call, when you need. The King an-

answered, I consent; make it as you think best. Then the Knight caused many Workmen to be brought, and having so done, he chose out certain for his purpose, and caused them to build him a fair lodging near the Walls of the Tower; this being finished, he made a covenant with one of the Workmen, (whom he thought fittest) to make a secret way to the Queens Lodgings: and when this was finished he killed the Work-man, because he should not make it known. Having thus done, he went in unto the Queen and did her reverence as became him; and they discoursed of many matters. Having thus passed the Day, the Night drawing on, he desired he might sleep by her one night, but she often denyed him; Yet nevertheless consented unto his request. Now they having spent the Night in pleasure, and Morning being come, the Knight returned to his Lodgings: and the Queen began to think with her self: what shall I do? if I should make my Husband acquainted herewith, two evils would come thereof; the one is my shame, and peradventure he would utterly forsake me, and cause me to be driven out of the Land for ever: The other is, that he would slay the Knight, for death it is not possible for him to escape, therefore I think it more expedient to be secret therein then to reveale it. After that, the Knight as often as it pleased him, went in

unto the Queen, and did his will with her; and she gave him a Ring, which the King had given her at her Wedding. This Knight was so famous in justing that in every battle and Tournament he had the victory: for which cause, he was in great favour with the King, so that he made him Steward and Governour over all his Land.

It happened on a day, that the King disposed to ride on Hunting, and commanded his Steward to be ready on the morrow to go with him: whereupon he offered himself willingly. On the morrow they entred the Forrest, all day chasing the Wild Beasts, and were so weary, that the King sate down by a Fountain to rest, and the Knight by his side: The Knight was no sooner set, but he fell asleep by the King, having the King on his finger, which the Queen had given him; which the King perceiving, knew it well. When the Knight awaked, and perceiving the King had seen the Ring, he fained himself to be sore sick and said: my honored Lord, I feel my self so sick, that if I do not hast me unto my Lodging, and seek out some present remedy, either by Physick, or some other course I am but a dead Man, therefore I pray you give me leave to go home. To whom the King made this answer: Go dear Friend, in the Name of God, and see there be nothing wanting to procure thy health, that my Court or

King-

Kingdom can afford. The King had no sooner ended his Speech, but immediately the Knight took leave: And getting upon his Horse, he hasted to his house, and as soon as he was come home, he alighted, and hasted to the Queens Lodgings, and gave her the Ring again, and told her withall, how the King had espied it upon his finger, when they were both set down to rest: Withall he told her, that he feigned himself to be very sick, for which cause y King gave him leave to return to his Lodgings: he also prayed her, that if the King at any time should call for the Ring, she should shew it unto him. This done, he took his leave of her, and went again unto his Lodging. Not long after, the King came to the Queen, and she received him right loving, and after a little time had passed, the King said unto her: My Renowned Lady, shew me the Ring that I gave you, for I have a great desire to see it. She answered: O my best beloved Lord, why at this time do you desire to see it? Then said he, if you shew it not to me incontinently, it shall repent you. Then she arose, and went unto her Cabinet, and took the King out of it: and having thus done, she brought it to her Husband: and when he had seen it, he was half ashamed, and said: my best beloved Queen: O how like is that Knights King unto this, which I saw upon his finger! for I believed it had been mine, and that was

the cause I did ask so hastily for it. And of this suspition I yeild my self guilty, my dear Lady in this behalf: the strength of the Tower deceived me, for I thought none could get therein but I my self alone, in regard none had the keeping of the keys but my self. She said unto him my dear Lord, wonder not, for one King may be like another, and Work-men seldom make one piece of work; but others make the same: But God forgive you in that you have suspected me; for you know the strength of the Tower, and the keys you have always in your Presence, and trust no Man therewith. After that the Knight ordained a great Dinner, and said unto the King: my Soveraign, My Lady and Lord is come from out of my Country to seek me, for whose sake I hy he ordained a Dinner, and would intreat your highness to do me the honor, as to dine with me this day, and taste such Meat as shall be provided. The King answered most willingly will I do you that worship, and more. The Knight was glad thereof, and by his secret way went unto the Queen, and said unto her, my beloved Lady, you must do thus: come in my Boate the privy way, and Cloath your self richly, and deck your self with Jewels, and other Ornaments, according to the Custom of my Country; then shall you sit at Table with my King, as my Soveraign Lady, and make

good

good cheer; She replyed, Sir Knight, I am ready to be attending to your better. When the time appointed was near, and the King coming from the Castle towards the Knights house, in the mean time, by the secret way the Queen entred the Kings Lodgings: (before the King could come) and apparelled her self after the manner of the Knights Country. When the King entred the house, she with Courtly salutations received him; and when the King had beheld her, he demanded of the Knight what Woman she should be that seemed so fair? Then answered the Knight: my Renowned Lord, it is my Soveraign Lady, that for the love she beareth me, is come out of my Country after me, to know why I should absent my self so long from her love and service. The speeches being ended, the Knight caused the King to sit down at the Table and made the Queen sit by him: The King thought it was his Queen, and said within himself, O how like is this Woman unto my Wife! So the strength of the Tower still deceived him, that he gave more credence unto the Knights words, then to his own eyes. The Queen began to talk to the King, and for to stir him to eat, and drink, and make good cheer: and as the King heard the voice, he said unto himself: O blessed Lord, how like is this Woman to my Queen in her behaviour, speech, visage, and in all

other conditions! and still the strenght of the Tower deceived him. In the end of the Feast the Knight prayed his beloved Lady to sing before the King; and she began to sing a Song of Love. When the King heard her, he knew her voice, and thought unto himself, is not this my Wife? and yet how can this be? I having the keys of the Tower my self in keeping: so all Dinner time the King sate Debating thus within himself. Dinner ended, he willed the Knight forthwith to take up the Table, he having urgent occasions that moved him thereunto; for he was sore troubled in mind. Whereupon the Knight said: my Lord, what is the reason you are so mellancholly? what is that discontenteth you? be not troubled, if it please you, we shall make you some pleasant sport. And the Gentlewoman said: my beloved Lord, if it please you with us to abide, we shall make you all the delight that this place can afford; if your Queen her self were here, she could not give you more content. Whereupon the King began to be angry, and said: Take away the Table, for I may no longer abide here, until that I have resolved my mind. Thereupon the Knight straightway obeyed the King, and took up the Table, giving thanks to all, but especially to the King his Soveraign Lord and Master.

Now the King departed, and went with all hasts

haſte unto the Caſtle, to ſee whether that his Quéen were therein or not: but in the mean time ſhe went in at the private dor and ſtripped off her uppermoſt Veſture, and put her ſelf into the ſame habit the King left her attired with. When the King entred therein, he found the Quéen in the ſame Cloathing he had left her in before: and ſéing all fell out contrary to his expectation, he kindly embraced her, and lovingly kiſſed her, and ſaid unto her: This day have I eaten with my Knight, and with his beloving Lady, who came out of her Country unto my Court to find him out; who being met, and overjoyed in the ſight of her, did preſently ordain a great Feaſt, and humbly intreated me to do him ſo much Grace, as to accompany him at his Feaſt. Whereupon I anſwered him: that for the love I did bear him, I would do him that honor and much more, if requeſted; whom I having beheld, ſhe ſéemed to me ſo fair, that ſince I was born, mine eyes have not ſéen one ſo like as ſhe is to you, inſomuch that all dinner time I was troubled with many Matters, and could hardly endure unto the end of the Feaſt, but that I muſt come ſée whether you were hers or there.

Then the Quéen anſwered him: O mighty King, wherefore do you miſtruſt me, having often found the contrary? Do you not know that

that this Tower is so fast, strong, and invincible, that no Man can enter in or out, without your knowledge? for you always keep the keys, and will not trust any therewith; how then is it possible I should be there? you may find one Man like another; you remember of late how you did mistake the Knights Rings: And have you more Arguments of suspition against me? was it not sufficient to debar me of liberty these many years, but you must needs be jealous besides? I tell you, O noble King, if you do not forsake your jealousie, and release me out of imprisonment, before three days be expired, I will end my days herein; For I had rather live a servant at liberty, than a Queen in Prison. The King answered: all that you have objected is true, of which I acknowledge my self guilty, wherefore have patience for a few days, and as sure as I Reign King of this Country, I will set you at liberty; and so he lovingly embraced her with a kiss, and returned to his own Lodgings. Now he had not rested above two days, but the Knight came and said unto the King: O my honourable Lord, I have long served your Highness; now it is time I return into my own Country; and for all the service that I have done unto you, I desire but this one thing before my departure, which is: To give me my bever the Priest, with your own hand, in

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the Church, my beloved Lady, whom I intend to wed, (who followed me out of my Countries for Love, and whom I shall bring thither again) as my lawful and true Wife, which will be to my great honor when I come into my Country. The King answered: that Petition, and more then that (if you will desire it) will I gladly fulfill. Then the King perfixed the day of marriage; when the good King came to Church honourably attended; the Priest was ready (adorned with his Vestments) to solemnize the Matrimony. The Knight apparelled the Queen in his own house after the manner of his own Country, and ordained two Knights to lead her to the Church, who believed it had been his Paramour. When they were come to the Church, the Priest said: who shall give this Woman to this Knight: the King said I shall give her unto her own Knight; and took her by the hand, and said, O good woman, you are so like my Queen, that my love is to you the greater, and also because you shall be wedded to this Knight whom I affect above all Men, and he shall be of my house, and so put the Queens hand into the Knights, and the Priest after the Order of the Church, bound them, and wedded them together in true and faithful wedlock. When all these Rites were finished, the Knight said unto the King: O most noble King, the Ship that I intend to go in towards

my

my Country, is now furnished for my journey, and ready to sail away, wherefore I humbly beseech your Noble Grace to accompany my beloved Wife thereunto, and that you would admonish her to love me, and have me in favour above all others living, and so much the rather, for your good Counsel. The King with his Followers (besides others) did accompany them unto the ship, for whose departure many were exceeding sorrowful and heavy. Then the King began to say unto the Queen: My dear Friend hearken well unto my counsel and see that you follow it; for it shall be to your profit: my most honored and beloved Knight hath now Wedded and done to you all the honor that in him is; wherefore, look that you love, honour, and obey him above all other Men, as God hath commanded, and that you be unto him true in all your Dealings. As soon as this Speech was ended, he delivered her unto the Knight, saying: my blessing go with you both, and our Lord keep and conduct you safely unto your own Countrey. Then the Knight and the Queen bowed their heads to the King, and gave him thanks for all the kindnesses that he had done them; and having so done, they committed him to the Almighty, and entred into the Ship; the Marriners hoisted sail before the Wind, and within a short space, the King lost sight of the Ship, and thence going

hastily

hastily into the Castle, he went to seek for his Queen; and when he could not find her, he was moved over all the parts of his body, and sought about all the Tower, so long, till at last he found out the hole that the Knight had caused to be made; and when he saw that, he wept bitterly, crying out: Alas, alas, this Knight in whom I had so great confidence, hath robbed me of my Wife! was not I a Fool, that gave more faith unto the words of a Knight; than to mine own eyes?

Then said the Empress: my Lord have you understood what I have said? The Emperor said: as well as may be. Then answered the Empress: Remember how he trusted the Knight, and yet the Knight deceived him: in like manner do you trust the seven Wise Masters, who labour to destroy me your Wife; and you give more credit to their words, than to your own eyes: for you have seen how your ungratious son hath rent and scratched me, whereof yet I bear tokens and marks about me, as you may see; also you know well how your accursed Son hath sham'd me; and you mark not, how they defend him in this his folly. Therefore it is to be feared, that it will happen to you worse than to the King of whom I have spoken unto you.

The Emperor replyed: I will believe mine own eyes before I will give Credence to

their

their words, and therefore to morrow I shall do Justice upon my Son. The next day the Emperor commanded his Son to be brought before him: which being done, he commanded him to be led to the place of Execution, there to suffer death according to the Law. Then there began to arise great noise and bewailing amongst the common people, for the death of the Emperors onely Son. At last when the seventh Master heard it, he ran immediately unto the Officers, which were leading him to the Gallows, and said: my Friends, I pray you not to make overmuch haste, but stay your hands a while, for I think this day, (with the help of the Almighty God) to save him from all perils: and from thence the Master hasted him to the Emperors Palace, and did him reverence according to his accustomed duty: But the Emperor with great indignation made him this answer: never more have you any joy in this world, for that you have sent my Son home untaught and dumb, whom I delivered unto you well speaking; for which cause you shall all be put to death with him. The Master answered: O most noble Emperor, the time is not long betwixt this and to morrow noon; then (by the grace of God) you shall hear him speak discreetly, and shall declare the truth of all things; and this I promise you he will perform to the full, upon pain of my life, if you will

will spare him so long time: if you find it not so, then take my life, and the lives of us all. Then said the Emperor: if I might but hear my Son speak, it would give me sufficient content, and I would not desire longer to live. Then answered the Master: all this and more you shall hear and see, and confess it to be true, if you will but abide this little time, and then the strife that hath been betwixt us and the Empress will clearly be decided. And if you suffer him to be put to death through the words of your most ungodly Wife, I tell you of a truth, it shall happen unsafe to you, even as it did to a Knight that dyed for a little blame that he laid his Wife to bed, to whom afterwards she was most unnatural: then said the Emperor; that example would I fain hear. Then said the Master; let your Son be called again, and I shall tell you so notable an example, that during your life you may beware of the unsteadfastness of Women. Then the Emperor said, I shall go call my Son again upon condition, that so soon as I shall hear him speak, as you have promised: the Master said, do that my Lord, and it shall be so, and began to tell as followeth.

The Example of the Seventh Master.

There was a Knight that had a fair young Wife, whom he loved entirely, so that he could

rould not be out of her sight. It hapned on a time, that they played together at Chess, and the Knight by chance had a knife in his hand, & she fortuned to smite her hand on the Knife, so that a little blood began to appear. When the Knight saw his wife bléd, he fell to the ground in a sound; his wife séing that, cast cold Water on his face, insomuch that he came a little to himself, and said lightly: call the Curate with the Holy Sacrament, for I must die; for the blood that I have séen come from your Finger, hath smitten death to my heart; Then the Priest came and comforted him much, and administred the Sacrament unto him, and anon he dyed: for whose death there was great sorrow, especially by his wife: also after the obser-

obsequies were finished; she went and lay upon the Grave, and there made great lamentation, and said she would never depart thence, but as a Turtle Dove she would for the love of her husband there abide, and dye. Then went her Friends and Neighbours unto her and said: what availeth this for his Soul, to live here weeping until you dye? it is better that you go home, and there give Alms for the love of God, and that shall more avail your soul, then in this place to abide. To whom she answered: I pray you hold your peace, you are evil counsellors consider ye not, how I am from him separated by death, for a little blood he saw come out of my finger? therefore I shall never from hence depart

Her Friends hearing that, made her a little house nigh the Grave: and putting therein all things necessary, went their wayes, thinking within a while she would be weary to be alone, and so desolate from all company, and thereby desire again the company of the people.

In the City was then a Law, that if an Offender against the Law were hanged, the Sheriff all night should watch the dead body armed; and if it happened that the body hanged were stolen, the Sheriff should lose all his Lands and his life at the Kings pleasure. It happ'ned soon after the Knight was dead, that a man should be hanged for trespassing, so that the Sheriff all

that night watched by the gallows, not far from the City; and the Church-yard was not far from the same: then began the Sheriff to be so cold, that he could not possibly endure it, but was even ready to dye, except he might speedily warm him, it was so extream cold, and so great a Frost: and by chance he espying a fire in the Church-yard, he hasted, and came thereto; and when he was come near to it, he knocked at the little house. The woman said, who at this time knocketh at the house of the sorrowful woman? he answered, I am the Sheriff that hath endured much cold, and am ready to freeze to death, unless without delay you let me warm my self, she said unto him: I fear that if I let you in, ye should cause me to be more heavy. He said: I promise you that I shall say no words to your displeasure: then she let him in: and when he had sitten a while by the fire, and was well warmed, he said unto her: O fair Woman, with your Licence would I fain speak but one word with you: she answered, Sir, say what pleaseth you: then he said, O Lady, you be a fair Gentlewoman, rich and young, were it not more convenient for you to dwell at home, and to give Alms, than to waste your self here with weeping? she said, Sir Knight, had I known this before, you had not come in: for I say to you, as I have said to others often times; you know my Husband loved me so well, that for a

little

little blood he saw me bleed out of my finger, he is dead; wherefore I will here dye for the love of him. As the Knight heard this, he took leave and went again unto the Gallows. And when he was come thither, and saw that the Thief (he left there hanging) was stolen away, he began to way heavy, and said: woe is me, what shall I do? for I have lost my life, and all my goods: and going up and down thus full of sorrow, he knew not what way to turn himself: at last he concluded to go to the desolate Lady, and shew her the heaviness of his heart, to wit, if she could give him any good Counsel: when he was come thither, he called, and she asked him the cause: and said: Madam I, am the Sheriff that was right now with you, and I would fain shew you the secrets of my heart; therefore I pray you open the Door: and he went in, and said unto her: O most vertuous Lady, I am now come to have your advice; for you know the Laws of the Land are, that when any man is hanged, and stolen off the Gallows, the Sheriffs Life and Goods be in the Kings hands. Now it happened while I was here, and warmed me, the Thief was stoln: therefore I pray fair Lady, for the love of God, give me your best advice, what to do. She answered: I have compasion upon you; for by the Law you have lost your life and goods to the King: do now after my counsel, and

ye shall lose neither: he answered, I am to you greatly bound hoping to have good comfort: she said: will you then promise to take me to your wife? the Knight answered; would God you were indeed so minded: but I fear you disdain to humble your self unto so poor a Knight: she said, I give you my will there: and he gave her again his will, and consented to be her Knight during his life. Then said she, ye know such a day my Lord was buried, which for the love of me dyed: take him out of the sepulchre, and hang him up instead of the Thief. The Knight answered: Lady, your Counsel is very good; then went they and opened the Sepulchre, and drew him out. The Knight said unto the Lady: how shall we now do? because e're the Thief was hanged two of his teeth were smitten out, and I fear me, if that were perceived, I shall die the death. Then the Lady said: take a Stone and strike out two of his Teeth: the Knight answered, Madam, that may I not do; for while he lived he was my trusty friend, and it should be to me great rebuked, to do so disloyal a deed to his body, being dead. She answers: for your love I shall do it; and presently took a stone, and smote out two of his teeth and said to the Sheriff: take him and hang him upon the Gallows like the thief. The Knight said; I fear to do it; for the thief in taking, was wounded upon his head;

and

and he lacked his ears. O Madam, God forbid that I do so to the dead body that I loved so well in his life. Then said she, give me your sword, and I shall for your love do it; and so took the sword, and smote a manly stroke on the dead mans fore-head, and cut of his ears; and when she had thus done, she said: now hang him. Then the Knight answered, yet I fear to hang him, for the Thief wanted both his Stones, and if he be searched, and not found without, all my labour is lost: then said she I never saw man so fearful, seing the matter is so sure: Take a Knife, and cut of his Stones; and he answered: That I may not do in any wise, and therefore I pray you spare me for you know what a man is without his Stones, she said: For the love of you I shall do it, and took the Knife and cut of her husbands Stones, and said: now take the Churle thus disfigured, hang him up without dread; and they went both, and hung the body upon the Gallows; and so was the Sheriff delivered. Then said the Lady, now ye be delivered from all dangers, by my counsel, therefore I desire you (according to promise) that ye wed me. The Knigt said, I have made a vow that I shall never wed other so long as I live, which I shall perform: then he said, O thou most shameful and worst of all Women, who would take thee to Wife? an honourabl and

lading Knight was thy Husband, who for a little blood that he saw issue out of thy finger dyed. Now hast thou smitten out two of his Teeth, cut off his ears and stones, and made a great wound in his Head: what Devil would marry thee: therefore thou shalt never shame good man more: I will rid thee of thy life: and so drew his Sword, and with one stroke smote off her head.

Then the Master said unto the Emperor. My Lord, have you understood what I have said? He answered: right well. Amongst all Women this was the worst, and the Knight rewarded her accordingly, that she should no more do shame. The Emperor said moreover, O good Master, might I but hear my Son speak I should have no care of my self. Then said the Master, to morrow you shall hear him speak, and he shall shew the truth of all the varience betwixt us and the Empress, as I hope: and so took leave of the Emperor, and departed

How DIOCLESIAN the Emperors Son complained on the Empress: and how he excused himself to her Complaint,

After that all the Masters took counsel how they should bring the Child out of Prison, and lead him to the Palace, so they went to the Child in Prison before midday, his coun-

counsel to hear: to whom the child said, what you will, shall please; but muse not your selves how I shall answer, or what I shall say; for with joy I shall answer all that shall be demanded of me. When the seven wise Masters heard that, they were exceeding joyful, and cloathed him in Purple, and Cloath of Gold; and two of the Masters went before him; one on his right hand, and another on his left, and the other three followed him, and before all went twelve Men with instruments of Musick, who brought him with great melody to the Palace: when the Emperor heard this Melody, he demanded what it was, then it was told him by the standers by, saying, mighty Emperor, it is your Son which cometh before you, and before all your Lords, to speak and excuse himself of all that is laid to his charge. The Emperor said: that is good Tydings, if I might hear my Son speak. And when the Child was come into the place, he rode to his Father, and said unto him: Hail my most dear and Royal Father.

And when the Emperor heard the voice of his Son, he was so glad, that for joy he fell to the Earth; but his Son hasted to take up his Father again, and when he came to himself, then began the Son to declare the whole matter to his Father: and there came so great a multitude to the Palace, to hear the Child speak, and

the noise of them was so great, that the Child could not be heard. The Emperor considering that, caused Money to be thrown into the Streets, that the people therewith should be busied out of the Palace, the better to hear the Child speak: but they regarded not the Money. When the Emperor perceived that, he commanded silence on pain of death: And when they were all still, the Child began to speak as followeth. O most dear Father, before I speak any thing, I intreat you, that the Empress with all her Chamber-Maids may be present. So the Emperor commanded the Empress with all her Maids to come without delay. The Empress hearing that, (in great fear) came with her Maids. and the child bade

them

them to ſtand before the people on a row, that he might ſée them. Then ſaid the Child, Sir, behold the Chamber-maid that ſtandeth there in gréen, (whom ye know the Empreſs loveth above all others) command her to be uncloathed before us all, and ſée what ſhe is. The Emperor ſaid dear Son, that would ſhame us all, to have a woman ſtand naked before us, he ſaid, if it be a woman, it is my ſhame; if not, let the ſhame abide in her. When ſhe was uncloathed, ſhe appeared to be a Man, whereat they wondred.

The Complaint of the Emperors Son, on the Emppeſs.

Then ſaid the Son unto his Father, behold this Ribauld hath many a night lain with your Wife in your Chamber, and hath defiled your Bed, and him the Empreſs loveth above all others, which thing you did not know.

When the Emperor had ſéen theſe things, he with great indignation gave command that both the Empreſs and Ribauld ſhould be burnt; but the Son anſwered: my Lord and Father, make no haſte to give Judgement, till I have reproved her for the grievous ſlanders ſhe did falſly accuſe me of, and declared how unjuſtly ſhe hath complained of me, and ſought all means how to take my life. Then ſaid the Emperor, my dear Son, I commit all the judge-

ment into your hands. The Son answered, if she be found a lyar, the Law shall give sentence against her: but my Royal Father, when you sent for me, at her earnest Request, then I with my Masters beheld the Stars; by which I perceived, that if I should have spoken unto you, or any living Creature, within the space of seven days: I should have dyed a most shameful death, and for that cause onely I did forbear to speak until this present.

And whereas the Empress most unjustly hath accused me, that I would have ravished her; therein she lyeth falsly, for she most adulterously provoked me to defile the bed of my most gratious Lord and Father the Emperor. And when she in no wise could bring me thereto, she took Pen, Ink, and Paper, and bad me write the cause wherefore I would not yeild. And when I had Written the cause thereof, and how I would not my Fathers Orchard defile, then she began to tear her cloaths, and scratch her visage, so that it gushed forth with blood, and cryed with a loud voice: This your Son (having a mind full of lust) would have wronged your Princely bed; and I resisting his lust, most inhumanely hath he torn my flesh. When the Emperor heard this; he beheld her with a full Countenance, and said in this manner: O wretched Woman, was not thy Ribauld sufficient to fulfil thy foul and latcherous

rous appetite, but wouldest also have made my Son? then fell the Empress at the Emperors feet, and cryed for mercy. The Emperor said, O thou cursed and unhappy Woman, thou asketh forgiveness, but art worthy of none, for thou hast deserved to die in three respects: first, in that thou hast committed Adultery: secondly, in that thou most lasciviously hast provoked my Son to most abominable sin, and laid the Crime falsly and unjustly upon him: thirdly and lastly, in that thou hast every day incited me by thy false tales to put my Son to death; therefore the Law shall have its course against thee, and condemn thee unto death, as thou hast deserved.

Then answered his Son, most Noble Father, you know well that for her leasings, I was daily led to Hanging: But my Masters with the help of God hath delivered me. O my most honourable Lord and Father, it was told you by the Empress, that I should also (by the help of my Masters) depose you: and that I did labour by all means to destroy you, and to sit in your Throne: would you not then have much grieved? have you not the whole command and Government of this your Kingdom? Wherefore then should I not use all the skill I have to help you, my most honored Father rather than any way to destroy you? and seeing from you I have my living, I will repute you me Sove-

raign

reign Lord and Father, during my life, am not in any manner depriue you of your honour, but buſie my ſelf about gouerning the ſame; and all your commands I ſhall fulfil: but it is as the Father that caſt his Son into the Sea to drown him, becauſe he ſaid he ſhould liue to be a greater Lord than his Father was; and yet the Son by prouidence was ſaued, and became greater than his Father, and yet was no hinderance to him, but profited him much! alſo you ſee that my life and carriage is never like to hinder you, but ſhall be to your comfort. Then ſaid the Emperor: bleſſed be the Almighty God, and the hour I begat thée and deſired ſuch a Son, that I find ſo expert in all things; tell me an example, by which we may perfectly underſtand thy wiſdom and my heart the better to enjoy thée.

Then ſaid the Son, honourable Father, command firſt ſilence to be made, that I be not letted, till I haue done: and when that is ended, giue ſeatence according to Law upon me and the Empreſs. Then commanded the Emperor ſilence: and the Child began to tell in ample manner as followeth.

The

The Example of DIOCLESIAN the Emperors Son.

THere was a Knight which had but one Son that he loved right dear in the beginning, as ye have loved me; whom he delivered to a Master that dwelt in a far Countrey, to be brought up in Larning and knowledge. This Child as he waxed in years, increased in wisdom and knowledge very much. And when he had been with his Master seven years, his Father desired to see him, and sent Letters that he should come again into his Countrey and visit his friends, as you sent for me. The Child was obedient to his Father, and came: at whose coming he did exceedingly joy, for that he was grown as well in comelinesse of Body, as in Doctrine and learning: and to every man appeared pleasant and gentle.

It happened upon a day that the Father, and Mother sitting at the Table, the Child serving them, a Nightingale came flying before the Window where they sate, and began to sing so sweetly, that they marvelled: And the Knight said: O how sweetly this bird singeth! Well were he that could understand his Song, and shew the interpretation thereof. Then said the Son: my worshipful Father, the Song of this Nightingale I could declare, but I fear your displeasure. The Father said: say boldly

boldly my Son the interpretation of the Bird, ane ye ſhall prove whether I be angry or not, but I ſhall mark well the cauſe of my anger. When the Son heard that, he ſaid: the Nightingale ſaid in her Song: That I ſhall become a great Lord, honoured of all men namely of my Father, who ſhall bring me water to waſh, and my Mother ſhall hold the Towel. The Father ſaid, thou ſhalt never have ſuch ſervice of us: nor ſuch dignity ſhall follow thée, and in great madneſs and woodneſs, he took his Son upon his ſhoulders, and ran to the Sea, and caſt him in, and ſaid: Lye there interpreter. The Child could ſwim, and ſwiming to Land, where he was four days without Meat or drink: the fifth day there came a Ship, and as the

the Child saw that, he called to the Shipmen, and said: for the love of God deliver me from death. The Ship-men saw it was a fair young man, and had compassion on him, and with the Boat fetch'd him aboard, and carried him into a far Countrey, and sold him to a Duke. The child grew very proper and fair, and the Duke loved him, and had him greatly in favour.

Upon a time the King of that Realm called all the great Lords and Noble Men within the Realm together, to sit in Counsel. This Duke then prepared to go to the said Counsel; and giving great regard to the wisdom of the Child, took the Child with him: and when they were assembled before the King and his Counsel: my well beloved Lords and Friends, said the King, will you know the cause wherefore I have assembled you? They answered: we all are (Soveraign Lord) at your command. Then said the King? it is a secret that I shall shew you: if any man can declare what it signifieth, I swear unto him by my Crown, I will give him my only daughter in marriage, and he shall be my fellow in my Realm so long as I live; and after my Death shall possess my whole Kingdom. And the Mistery is this.

Three Ravens follow me still wheresoever I go, crying out with such horrible voices, that the pain is grievous for me to hear them, and much more to behold their looks: wherefore if

there

there be any man which knoweth the cause of this their earnest following of me, and can shew what they mean by their crying, and avoid them away from me, without doubt I shall fulfil this promise that I have made. And as the King had thus said: there was none found in all the Counsel, that understood the cause, or could drive away the Ravens. Then said the Child unto the Duke: My Lord, think you the King will perform what he hath promised: Will you, said the Duke: that I give the King knowledge of what you can do? Then the Child said: I will my life pledge, that I shall make good what I have said. When the Duke heard that, he went to the King and said, My Lord and King, here is a young man that doth promise to satisfie you in all that you desire touching these Ravens, if you will fulfil what you have promised. The King swore by the Crown of his Kingdom, the which I have promised shall be fulfilled. Then he brought the Child before the King; & when the King beheld him, he spake unto him after this manner; O fair Child, can you answer this my question? The Child answered: Yea my Lord, and that in the best manner: Your question is; Wherefore the Ravens follow you, and horribly call upon you? to which I answer; It happened, that there were two Ravens, a Male and a Fimale, that brought out betwen them

them a third Raven, and in that place there was a great Famine and scarcity of all manner of Food, that Men, Beasts, and Fowls dyed for want. Now the third Raven was at that time very young, and not able to fly abroad, to get her living: the Female she left it, seeking how she might get her own living; and came no more to the Neast. The Male seeing that, with great penury and labour fed the young Raven till he was able to fly: and when the Dearth was gone, the Female Raven returned home again to the young Raven, and would accompany with him; but the Male seeing that, would have driven her away saying: she in his great necessity left his company, and therefore now he should have no fellowship with her. She alledged, that she had in his hatching great labour and sorrow, and sufferred much penury, and for that cause she would rather enjoy his company then the Male.

For this cause my Sovereign Lord, they follow you, asking which of them shall have company with the young Raven; and this is the cause of this horrible clamour that they make daily unto you. But my honoured Lord, when you have given sentence, you shall never more be troubled with their crying. Then answered the King, because the Female hath forsaken the young Raven in his necessity, it standeth with justice that she should not follow him, but

be without his fellowship. And whereas she saith that in hatching and bringeth forth she had great pain and travel, that helpeth not, for her pain was turned into joy, as soon as she saw the young Raven in the world. But in regard the Male is the cause of the generation of every beast of the Earth, and every foul of the Air; and also because the young Raven in his necessity was sustained, and fed by the Male; therefore I conclude both for judgement & sentence definitive, that the young Raven shall abide with the Male, and not with the Female.

When the Ravens heard that sentence, with great noise and cry they flew up into the Air, and were no more seen in all that Region.

This done, the King demanded of the young

man

man, what his name was? he answered, I am called Alexander: Then said the King, I will that you grant me one request, which is, that from henceforth you take me, and none other, for your Father: for you shall have my daughter to Wife, and the whole Government and possession of my Realm. Young Alexander abode still there with the King, and every man did exceedingly love him; for he began to haunt Justs and Tourneys, wherein he always won the prize before all other in Ægypt, so that his Pær was not to be found: neither was there so hard a question put to him, but he could make known the true sence and meaning thereof.

At that time there was an Emperor named Titus, who excelled in courtesie and curiosity, all other Emperors, Kings and Princes in the world; insomuch that such Fame flew over the World of it; that whosoever would profit in cunning, manners, or behaviour, must go to the Emperors Court. When Alexander heard thereof, he said to the King: my most honorable Lord and Father, you know that the world is full of the fame of the Emperor, that it is very delectable to abide in his Court: wherefore, if it please you my renowned Lord and Father, I would very gladly go to his Court that I may obtain more Wisdom, and grow prompted in Manners and Behaviour, then now I am. Whereupon answered the King: it pleaseth

me right well; but take with you plenty of Gold and silver, and other necessaries, that you my honor there may save, and have also that which is to you most requisite and necessary. And it semeth unto me most expedient, that before your departing you do marry my Daughter.

Then answered Alexander; Will it please you my Lord to spare me at this time, and at my return I shall wed her with all honor unto her appertaining. The King answered; Since it is your will to go unto the Emperors Court, I give my consent, then Alexander took his leave of the King, and took with him abundance of treasure, and went to the Emprors Court: where when he was come, with many followers he went before the Emperor, and fell upon his knees, and did him Reverence.

The Emperor rose for his Seat Imperial, and kissed him, and asked whence, and what he was, and wherefore he was come: he answered, I am Son and heir of the King of Ægypt, and am come to serve your most high Majesty, if it please you to accept of me. The Emperor said, he was heartily welcome: and committed him to his Steward, and made him his Carver. The Steward ordained him a fair Chamber, and provided all things that were necessary to the same; and Alexander behaved him-

himself so well, that in short time he was beloved of all people.

Not long after came the Kings Son of France to serve the Emperor, and to learn good qualities, and comely behaviour; him the Emperor received honorably, demanding his name; and of what kindred he was come: he answered, I am Son to the King of France, and I have to name Lodowick your servant: Then said the Emperor, I have made Alexander my Carver, and you shall be my Cupbearer, that always ye may serve at my Table; and commanded the Steward to assign him a Lodging; whom he placed with Alexander. These two were so like in stature, visage, and condition, that hardly the one might be known from the other, but that Alexander was more cunning than Lodowick, for he was Feminine, and shame-fac'd: and these young men loved well.

The Emperor had one onely Daughter named Florentine, right fair and gratious, that should be his heir whom he lov'd intirely; she had a Court and Servants all guyd: to her the Emperor every day accustomed to send from his Table of his Dainties, in token of love, by Alexander, insomuch that the Daughter began to have him marvellously in her favour, because of his wise and comely behaviour.

Upon a day, Alexander had such business, that he serv'd not at the Table, nor none of his

in his room: Lodowick perceiving that, served for him, and as soon as he had served in his last service upon his knee, the Emperor commanded him to bear a dish to his Daughter as he was wont: thinking he was Alexander. Then Lodowick went to the Emperors Daughter, saluting her with great Reverence, and set the meat before her; till then he had not seen her. She perceiving it was not Alexander, said to him, what is your Name, and whose Son are you? He answered to her, Madam, I am the Kings Son of France, and my Name is Lodowick: she said, I thank you for your pains: and then he departed: in the mean time came Alexander to the Table, and they fulfilled their service.

Dinner being done, Lodowick went to bed sore sick: Alexander perceiving that, went to his Chamber and said unto him, O my best beloved Friend and Fellow, how is it with you, and what is the cause of your infirmity? He answered, The cause I know not, but I am sore sick, and fear I cannot escape death. Alexander said: the cause of your infirmity I know well: for to day as you bare the meat to the Emperors Daughter, ye beheld her beauty so fervently, that your heart was ravished with her love. Whereupon he answered: O Alexander, all the Physitians in the World could not more truly judge my sickness, but I fear

fear it will be my death. Then said Alexander, be of good comfort, I will help you unto my power; and forthwith went to a Merchant, and bought with his own money a fair Cloath, set with pretious Stones, unknown to Lodowick. and presented it in his behalf to the Princess: as soon as she beheld it, she asked where he had that costly cloath? he said, Madam, of the son of the most Christian King of France, who sendeth it you for your love; for he having but once beheld your Princely face is grown sick, even unto death; therefore if you suffer him to perish, you will never recover honor.

Then said she: Good Alexander, would you counsel me to lose my Virginity? God defend that; and be you sure Alexander, that for such Messages, you shall never win thanks of me: therefore go out of my sight, and speak no more thereof. When Alexander heard that, did obeysance, and departed.

The next day Alexander went again to the City, and bought a Chaplet that was twice the value of the Cloath, and went to the Princesses Chamber, and gave it her on the behalf of Lodowick. And when she saw that costly gift, she said unto him, I marvel that so often you have seen and spoken with me, and have not done your own errand in speaking for your self, but for another. Then answered he, O Madam, I have not done so, because my birth is

not to be compared with yours: also my heart was never so wounded: and he that hath a good fellow, is bound for to do him true fellowship. And therefore now excellent Princes, of your most abundant pitty, have compassion on him, and make him whole, that you have so sore wounded, that it be not for ever laid unto your cruelty and hardness of heart; she answered him go your way, for at this time I will give you no answer: and as he heard that, he departed.

And the third day he went to the City, and bought a Girdle that was of more value, and costlier then the Chaplet was, and presented it to her in the behalf of Lodowick: and when she beheld that gift so precious, she said unto Alexander, say to Lodowick that he come to my Chamber about the third hour in the night, and he shall find the door open: and Alexander hearing that, was glad, and went to his Fellow and said: my best beloved fellow be of good comfort, for I have conquered the Princess to you, and this night I shall bring her to her Chamber. And when that was said, he started up as though he had wakened out of his sleep, and as well revived, and for great joy became well: the next night, Alexander took Lodowick and brought him to the Chamber of the Lady; with whom he was in solace all night: and from that time forth all her mind was upon him, so that there was but one love between them both.

And

And after that Lodowick used oftentimes to visit her, so that in process of time it came to the ears of the Knights and Gentlemen of the Court, how that the Emperors daughter was known by Lodowick: And they conspired among themselves, how they might find him, and intrap him so as to take him. As Alexander had knowledge thereof, he armed him to withstand them; and when the Knights understood that, they feared Alexander, suffered his fellow to go in peace. Alexander many times put himself in jeopardy for him, he not knowing thereof: but the Princess knew it well.

In short time after came Letters to Alexander of the death of the King of Egypt, that he should hastily come, and receive his Kingdom with honor and joy: and that shewed he unto the Princess and to Lodowick, and also of his departing: wherefore they were sorrowful; he said also to the Emperor, my honorable Lord, pleaseth it you to understand, I have receiv'd letters of the death of my father; wherefore it behoveth me to go, and receive the Kingdom, and that you will be pleased to give me leave to depart; and for all the benefits to me done, I offer my self and all my goods: and rather than I should by my going any way displease you my Lord. I will forsake all my Realm, and abide with you still.

Then

Then said the Emperor, know you for certain that for your departure I am right heavy, for you were the best servant in my Court: but it becometh not an Emperor to hinder his Servants from their advancements, but rather promote them to higher Honor: therefore go you unto our Treasurer, and he shall deliver you as much Gold as you will have, and in the Name of God (and my Blessing) go into your Country. And thus Alexander had leave of the Emperor, and bad him farewel: and they were also sorrowful for his departure, for he was beloved of all.

Lodowick with the Princess, brought him on his way seven Miles at least: after that Alexander, would not suffer them to go any further: then fell they both to the ground with great heavines. And Alexander took and lifted him up, and comforted him with fair words, and said: O Lodowick, my best beloved fellow! I warn you that the secrets betwixt you and my Lady, you hide as privily as you may, and take good heed to all things: for I wot another shall come and be in my stead, that shall envy you of the favour and grace that you stand in with the Emperor, and day and night shall lie in wait to take you with a fault, ane to put you to rebuke. Then answered Lodowick, and said: O Alexander, I shall beware as much as is possible: but how shall I do when I shall want

want your company: Therefore one thing I shall desire you, that you take this Ring of me for a remembrance. Then said he, I shall for the love of you gladly receive your Ring; and yet I shall never without the Ring forget you: and so he committed them both to God. Then they embraced each other about his neck, kissed, and departed.

Not long after the Kings Son of Spain, named Guido, was received of the Emperor in the room of Alexander, to whom the Steward assigned Alexanders Chamber: the which was very sore against the will of Lodowick, but he could not help it.

Guido seeing that Lodowick against his will had him in his fellowship, he grew envious against him, so Lodowick of a long time, for fear of the same Guido, kept him from the company of the Lady: nevertheless afterwards, being overcome with her Love, sometimes he went again unto her as before. Guido perceiving the same, waited so long thereon, that he knew the truth, and was therefore certain that the Painters was by Lodowick known, and he had company with her.

Upon a time it happened that the Emperor stood in the Hall, and praised Alexander for his gentleness and wisdom. Guido hearing said: my Lord, he is not so worthy lord, and mender as you imagine, for he hath a lin your

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been a Traytor in your House. Then the Emperor said, Tell me how? Guido said, You have but one onely daughter, which shall be your heir, and her Lodowick hath defiled, through the help of Alexander; and he goeth to her every night as it pleaseth him. As soon as the Emperor heard thereof, he was sore moved, and Lodowick happened to come through the hall: and as the Emperor saw him, he said, What hear I of thee, thou untrue body? if it be proved, thou shalt dye the most shamefullest death that can be devised. Lodowick said: my Lord, what is the cause? Guido answered: I depose here before my Lord, that thou hast defiled his onely Daughter, and every Night doest Fornication with her: and with Battle I shall make it good upon thy Body, with my Body. Then said Lodowick, I am innocent, and falsly thou dost belie me, and therefore I hold the Battle, and trust to God thy falshood shall come upon thy own head. Then the Emperor assigned them the day of Combate. That done, Lodowick went unto the Lady, and shewed her the cause, and the day of Battle, by the Emperor assigned, and in what manner [illegible] had accused him; and said unto her, [illegible] it behoveth me to have your Counsel, or [illegible] must dye; for you know it would not a[illegible] to have gainsaid the Battle, without [illegible] have yeilded my self guilty: Guido is hardy,

hardy, that his like is none but Alexander, and I am feeble, and therefore if I fight the Battle against him, I were but a dead man; and so you shall abide rebuke. Then said she, follow my counsel, in that you mistrust your self, go hastily unto my Father, and say, ye have received Letters, whereby you are assured, that the King your Father is sore sick, and lyeth upon his Death-bed, and he desireth to speak with you in person, and to dispose of his Kingdom before he departeth this life: so desire him to give you leave for the love of your Father, to go to visit him, and that he will prolong the day of battle; that in the mean season you may go and come, and when you have gotten leave; as hastily as you can, secretly go to King Alexander, and take him apart, and shew him the cause of your coming, and desire him in this extremity, and he will help and save us.

When Lodowick heard that counsel, it pleased him well, and he did according: and having obtained leave, and respite of the Battle assigned, he departed towards Ægypt, and never stayed till he came into King Alexanders Castle. When King Alexander understood his coming, he was very glad, and went to meet him, receiving him honourably, and wondring much at his coming.

Then said Lodowick, O my dear Lord, and best beloved friend, my life and death is in your

hands,

bands, for as you said before, that I should have another Fellow, which should lye in watt to espye me and destroy me, without I looked more wisely to my self; so long as I could, I did abstain from her; but afterwards the Kings son of Spain watched me till he perceived the truth: in the end he accused me to the Emperor, so that on the eighth from this day, I must be ready to fight with him body against body: and ye know he is a very strong hardy man, and I am weak and feeble: therefore hath Florentine counselled me, that I should not hide this matter from you, for she knoweth you to be a faithful friend, that would not leave us in this necessity.

Then said Alexander, is there any that knoweth of your coming unto me besides Florentine? he answered him, no creature living for I took leave of the Emperor to go visit my Father, lying grievously sick. Then Alexander asked him: what counsel hath Florentine given you, and how might I help you? he said, O my faithful friend, thus she hath counselled me: considering that we be like each other, you should come and performe the battle, and no one would know you but she; and the Battle done, I would come again to the Court, and you return to your own Country. Then he asked him, when the Battle should be: and he said, eight days hence.

Then

Then said Alexander: if I but one day tarry before I depart, I cannot come by the day prefixed, tell me what I shall do, I have bidden all my subjects, that to morrow they should come to my Wedding, and if I should go, then is the day lost; if I go not to the battle, then Florentine and you are undone: What think you is best. when Lodowick heard that, he fell to the earth: and began to sorrow without measure, saying, sorrow comes suddenly to me on all sides. Then said Alexander, be of good comfort, for I shall not forsake you, though I should lose my Life and Kingdom: but hear what I have thought upon: seeing we are both alike so that the one cannot be known from the other; and as for me, I am not rightly known here, but my Barrons & other my subjects will take you for me, therefore you shall here abide, and marry my Wife in my stead, and hold the Feast and Nuptials, and do all things as if my self were at present, but when you come to bed with my Wife look you there be true and faithful: and I shall without tarrying take my Horse, and ride where the battle shall be, and if God gives me victory, I will come again secretly, and you shall go again unto your best beloved. This done Alexander bad Lodowick farewel, and took his journey towards the Emperors Court to fight the battle with Guido; and Lodowick tarryed in Egypt instead of King Alexander.

Next

Next morning came Lodowick, as though he had been King Alexander, and solemny in the face of the Church he espoused King Alexanders wife, and solemnized the Marriage Feast, with great Royalty of Delicates, and daintie plenty of all Wines, and divers Instruments of Musick, with great joy and Chear for the Noblemen, and all others that were there assembled. And when the Night was come he went to bed with the Queen, and laid betwen him and her a naked Sword? whereat she wondred, but saying nothing, and so he lay with her every Night, while Alexander was gone.

Now King Alexander at the day prefixed, came unto the Emperor, and said: O most Soveraign Lord, I have left my Father very sick,

sick and in hazard of death, nevertheless I am come to perform my promise, with a full resolution to defend my honour. The Emperor said: ye do honourably, and according to the valour of a Nobleman; and Fortune shall favour you (I hope) in your righteous quarrel.

And when the Emperors Daughter understood that *Alexander* was come, she sent for him; and when he came to her, she courteously embraced him, and with great joy kissed him, and blessed the time that she saw him again; and demanded where he had left her love Lodowick? then he declared unto her the whole circumstances, and how he had left him King in his Realm. So he took his leave of her, and went to Lodowicks Chamber, no Creature thinking but that he was Lodowick, except *Florentine* only. The next day before *Alexander* went to the Battle, he said unto the Emperor in the presence of Guido: My most Renowned Soveraign Lord; Guido hath falsly accused me unto your Noble Grace, in saying that I should be so familliar with the Princess your most vertuous and only Daughter, to the great dishonour of your noble person, and hers: I swear by the Holy Evangelist, that she was never in any wise known by me, as he hath alledged unto you, which I shall make good upon his Body with the aid and help of God

Then answered Guido: yet once I say again and swear by the Holy Evangelists, and by all that God hath made, that thou hast had knowledge of, and defiled the Emperors Daughter; and that I will make good upon thy head.

Whereupon they leapt upon their Coursers, and ran so fiercely one at another with their Spears, that they both broke and shivered in pieces: Then they drew their Swords, and fought so long, until at last Alexander, with great might at one stroke, smote off Guido's head, and sent it unto the Emperors daughter; whereof she was glad, and bare it unto her Father, and said, Father, behold the Head of him that had so falsly defamed you and me.

When the Emperor perceived the Victory, he sent for Alexander, whom he thought to be Lodowick, and said, O Lodowick, this day your honour and my daughters you have saved: you shall be to morrow in my favour; and whosoever shall again defame you, shall for ever stand in my indignation.

Then answered Alexander: God always helpeth them that trust in him, and revengeth wrong done to the innocent. But most renowned Lord, one thing I intreat, that it will please you to give me leave to go see how it standeth with my Father, whom I left sore sick, and if he be any thing amended, I shall incontinently return. Then the Emperor said: that

that pleaseth me; but you may in no wise leave me, for I cannot be without your presence.

Alexander having taken leave of the Emperor, with all speed he could rode back unto his Realm. Lodowick having heard of his return, with much joy met him, and friendly received him, saying: most true friend of all friends, tell me how fortune has favoured you in this your journey and business, and to what end have you brought it? then he said, go to the Emperor and serve him as before, for I have gotten you more favour at his hands than you had before, and have also cut off the head of your greatest enemy.

Then said Lodowick: You have not only at this time saved my life, but preserved me heretofore, which kindness I shall never forget, neither as yet can I requite: but God reward you, and so he departed to the Emperors Court, and there was no man that had any knowledge of the absence of King Alexander, except Lodowick.

When night was come, he went to bed to the Queen, and as soon as he was laid, he began sweetly to imbrace her, and with friendly words he kissed her. Then said she, you have made this time tedious in that you have shewed nothing of friendship or love: how may this be: then said he, wherefore say you that? she said,

every night you have laid betwixt us a naked Sword, and have never turned towards me till now. And when he heard that, he thought on the truth of his fellow, and said: O my dear Lady, it was not done for any ill will, but for tryal of Love. But she said to her self: that Love you shall have no more, but despight, and I will be revenged upon thee.

Then there was a Knight that she had a little loved, and she began to love him more, and more, till at the last they sought how they might destroy the King, and therefore they got poyson and poysoned him, so that if he had not been strong of Complection, he had died thereof; for it wrought so sore, that it caused him to be a most foul and horrible Leper, as

as was ever seen upon the earth. The Lords and Noblemen of his said Realm, and the Queen also seeing this, despised him and said, It behoveth not a Leper to Reign over us, for he cannot beget any beautiful Heirs and so he was despoiled of his Dignity Royal, and driven out of his Realm.

In the mean time died the Emperor of Rome, and Lodowick married his Daughter, and after that Lodowicks Father died, so that Lodowick Reign'd both Emperor of Rome, and King of France at once.

When King Alexander heard of that he thought in himself, now my fellow Reigneth, and Ruleth both the Empire of Rome, and Realm of *France*: To whom may I go better, than unto him, for whom I have often ventured my life? and upon a night he rose and made him ready, & took with him his Staff and Clapper and went towards the Emperors Country.

And when he was come nigh the Gate: he sate down amongst other poor Lazers, expecting the giving of Alms; and upon a sudden as the Emperor went out of the Palace, all the poor Lasers began to ring their Clappers, and good King Alexander did as the other, but there was no Alms given him, so he tarried until the Emperor was set and served at the Table.

Then went King Alexande. unto the Gate, and knocked; and the Porter asked: who was

there? Alexander answered him, I am a poor despised man, I pray you for the love of God, turn your sight from my visage, but for the reward of God, do my message to the Emperor. He asked what was the matter? Alexander said: Go and tell him here is a Lazer right horrible ugly to see, which prayeth him for the love of God and King Alexander, that he will grant him this day to eat his Alms before him upon the Earth in his Hall, The Porter answered, I wonder you dare desire that of my Lord: For all the Hall is full of Lords and Gentlemen; and if they should behold you, they would abhor their Meat; but forasmuch as you have required it of me solemnly, for the love of God, I shall do your errand, whatsoever happeneth: and so he went and did his Message to the Emperor. When the Emperor heard the Porter name Alexander King of Ægypt, he said to the Porter, go thy ways, and bring him before me, how horrible and ugly soever his visage be, and ordain him a place before me, that he may eat in my presence.

The Porter brought him immediately, and ordained him a place, and set him to Meat before the Emperor, and when he had well refreshed himself, he said unto one of the Emperors servants, my dear friend, do me this errand unto the Emperor: say unto him, that I pray him for the love of God and King Alexander

der that he will send me his Cup full of Wine. The Servant said, for the love of God I will do it, but I believe it will not be; for if you should but touch my Lords Cup he will by no means drink of the same again; nevertheless he did the errand.

And when the Emperor heard him name King Alexander, he commanded his cup to be filled of the best Wine, and carried to him, which Wine when he had received, he put into his bottle and took the Ring that Lodowick had given him, and put into the Cup, and sent it again unto the Emperor.

When the Emperor saw the ring, he instantly knew that it was the same he had given unto King Alexander in friendship, when he departed from him, and thought in his heart that King Alexander had been dead, or else that this Man very strangely came by the Ring: and commanded presently that the Lazer should not depart, till he had spoken with him: for in no wise could he have any knowledge of him, nor yet repute him for Alexander.

After Dinner was done, the Emperor took the sick Man apart, and asked him how he came by that Ring? King Alexander demanded if he knew the Ring? The Emperor said: I know it well. Alexander said, wot you also to whom you gave it? The Emperor said: I wot right well how it is. Then said Alexander,

der, that you know not me: for I am Alexander unto whom you gave the same, when the Emperor heard that he fell to the ground for sorrow, and tore his Robes, and with many sighings, and bewailings, said: O Alexander, you are the one half of my Soul: how is your goodly and delicate Body now so unclean and infected; that was so fair and pleasant to behold. He answered: This is hapned unto me for the great fidelity you have done me in the bed with my Wife, when you laid a naked sword betwixt you and her, wherefore she became wroth, and hated me, so that she and a Knight that in former time she had loved, have poysoned me as you see, and driven me out of my Realm.

and when the Emperor heard that, he took him about the neck and kissed him, and said: O my most dear and intirely beloved Brother, I sorrow to see you in this great perplexity, I would to God I might dye for you. But my most dear friend, suffer patiently a little time, till we have sent for all the Wise Masters in Physick, to have their Advice, if there be any remedy to be had, or hope of recovery of your health, and if it be possible to help you, we shall neither spare Lordship, Empire, nor any other goods temporall, to make you whole and sound.

In the mean time he was brought into a fair Chamber, richly furnish'd with all things requisite for his ease and health. Then in all haste he

he sent Messengers through all parts of the World, for the most expert Physitians that might be found, of which within a Month after, were assembled before the Emperor thirty, that were expert, and skilful in that Science; to which the Emperor said: my well beloved Masters, I have a Friend that is very grievously infected with a foul Leprosie, whom I would very gladly were healed, and made as sound and whole as ever he was: sparing neither for gold or silver, or any other cost whatsoever, so that he might recover his health again. Then answered the Masters, all that is possible to be done in Physick, you shall soon understand after we have seen the person: and when they saw him, they knew the cause of his infirmity, and said, it was incurable for all Physicians living.

When the Emperor heard that he was right sorry, and committed it to Almighty God, calling unto him most of the Religious Men that dwelt near the Court; and a number of poor people, besides many other devout Persons, desiring them earnestly to make Prayers unto Almighty God, that he would vouchsafe of his infinite goodness to make whole his dear friend King *Alexander*. And he himself (with many others) fasted and prayed to Almighty God, for the speedy recovery of his friend.

Now

Now upon a time, as King Alexander was at his Prayers, there came unto him a voice from Heaven, ſaying: Tell Lodowick the Emperor, that if he with his own hands will ſlay thoſe two Children which his Empreſs had at one burthen, and with the blood of them waſh and bath thy body thy fleſh ſhall become as fair, and as clear, as the bodies of theſe little Children; if not, thou muſt never look to be cured whil'ſt Breath is in thy body: and ſo farewel.

Now when King Alexander had heard this ſtrange voice, he began to think with himſelf what it was, and whence it came: then he replyed unto himſelf: This Viſion is not to be ſhewed; for it is contrary to humane Nature, that any Man ſhould ſlay his own Sons, for the recovery of a ſtranger.

The Emperor continued night and day in Prayer with great Devotion, earneſtly praying to God for King Alexander, never ceaſing until a voice came unto him and ſaid: how long will you thus call and cry unto me? when it was openly ſhewed unto King Alexander, by what means he might recover his health, and his body become clear without either ſpot or blemiſh?

The Emperor hearing that voice, he went to King Alexander, and ſaid unto him? of all Friends the beſt and moſt true, bleſſed be the moſt High and everlaſting God, who never fail-

faileth them that put their truſt in him; of whom I have knowledge, that it is ſhewed unto you, how you may be recovered of your Leproſie; wherefore I intreat you that you will plainly lay open unto me how this may be done for the reſtoring of your former health that we may have joy together, and if you nèd any thing that may do you good, I will fulfil it unto my power; yea, and for your health give all that I have.

Alexander ſaid, Sir, I dare not ſhew you how I may be cured of my Leproſie, for it exceedeth, and is a thing againſt nature, therefore I will not as yet ſhew it you, how be it I have a great truſt and confidence in you.

The Emperor ſaid, Alexander, Put your truſt in me ſtill; whatſoever is poſſible to be done for recovering your health, I will do it; and therefore conceal nothing from me, I pray you.

Then ſaid Alexander, I have of God knowledge that if you will ſlay your two Sons with your own hands, and waſh me in their blood, I ſhall be whole: therefore I have not ſhewed it unto you: for methinks it is againſt nature, that the Father ſhould ſlay his own Children for the health of a ſtranger. The Emperor ſaid, Say not that you are a ſtranger, for I love you as my ſelf, and therefore if I had ten Children I ſhould not ſpare one for your health.

After

Afterwards the Emperor espyed his time when the Empress was out of the way, and went into the chamber where the children slept, and drew his knife, and cut both their throats, and gathered the blood into a Vessel, and then bathed Alexander therewith: and when he was

bathed his body was as fair and clean as though it had been a young Child. Then the Emperor had perfect knowledge of his visage and killed him, saying, O good Alexander, now I see you in the same form I have oftentimes delighted in.

Blessed be Almighty God, that ever I had these children by whom your health is restored; and your body made pure and clean. And as yet none had knowledge of the death of these Children, save the Emperor and Alexander.

And when the Emperor saw that good King Alexander was perfectly healed, he said unto him, I will ordain you an honourable company, and you shall go hence about five miles; and the next day send me a Messenger, and let me know the day of your return. And I shall then with great solemnity come and meet you, and you shall remain with me until I may conveniently provide for the recovery of your Realm.

This Counsel pleased King Alexander well, and was performed: for on the next day following there came a Messenger to the Emperor certifying him of the return of King Alexander.

When the Empress heard these tydings, she rejoyced, and said unto the Emperor: O my best beloved Lord, have you not just cause to rejoyce, seeing Alexander King of Ægypt is now coming to see you, whom of long time you have not seen? if you please to go and meet him with your Lords and Gentlmen, I shall follow with my Ladies and Gentlewomen; and as yet she knew not of the death of the two children.

Then rode the Emperor and Empress with great company of Lords and Ladies, to meet with good King Alexander; and when they met, with great reverence they received him, and with great joy brought him into the Palace; and at the time of Dinner, Alexanders was placed betwixt the Emperor and the Empress, and all the Mirth and Cheer that she could make, she shewed unto him.

When the Emperor saw that, he was glad, and so exceeding well pleased, that he said, O mine own Florentine, it glads me above all things, that you make unto King Alexander so good Cheer. Then answered the Empress: Wherefore should I not? is not his company unto us more precious than Gold and Silver; but unto you my renowned Lord, much more: for by his means you attain'd unto so great honour and Dignity, and by him many times you have been saved from death. The Emperor answered: Then I pray you dearly beloved Florentine, hear my words: saw you not that deformed Lazer, which yesterday sate before our Table, and prayed me for the love of God and good King Alexander, that I would give him drink? she said: my honourable Lord, I saw him well: a more horrible Man I never beheld. Then said the Emperor: I demand of you: Put case that he were King Alexander, and that he could not be made whole, but with the blood of your two Sons, which you in one day brought into the world; would you that the blood should be shed, that he might bath himself therein, and therefore have perfect health and comely favour, as you now see him have? She answered: my renowned Lord and Husband, wherefore demand ye of me that question? I tell you of a truth, that if I had ten sons I should gladly slay them with my own hands

to prepare for him a Bath and would wash him therein my own self, rather than I should leave him in such a loathsome and miserable case, so horrible to behold, and in such danger of death withal, God might send us more Children, but such a Friend were a thing impossible for us ever hereafter to find throughout the whole World.

When the Emperor heard this, he was well pleased, and said; O my loving Empress, had you rather have your Children dead, then Alexander should languish in his Leprosie? Then shall I shew you the whole truth of the matter: That foul Lazer which you saw was *Alexander* that sitteth here by us, and is made whole with the blood of our two Sons, and they are dead.

As soon as the Empress heard that, she began with extremity of sorrow mournfully to cry out as nature would she should, although she had said before, she had rather see her Children dead, then *Alexander* remain in such misery.

The Nourishers of the Children understanding this, presently with great crying ran to the Nursery: and great bewailing was made through the Emperors Court for his two sons; and when the Nourishers came to the Chamber, they found the Children playing, and singing a Song of praise and thanksgiving to the Father Son, and holy Ghost, for restoring their lives. Then they returned with all haste

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unto the Emperor and Empress, & shewed unto them how the Children were living, and that about their throats where they were cut, they had circles of Gold: whereof were great joy and gladness in all the Court, with thanksgiving to Almighty God, for that exceeding great miracle and wonderful work.

After that the Emperor with a great multitude assembled together, went with King Alexander into Ægypt, and set him again in possion of his Realm. The Queen and the Knight, who had lived long together in Adultery, he caused to be slain. And when this was done, the Emperor had one only Sister. whom he married unto King Alexander.

When King Alexander had obtained all his Realm again, and was set in rest and peace, the Emperor returned unto his Empire: and King Alexander so wisely and politickly Governed himself in his affairs, that he overcame his rebellious enemies.

And when he was seated in his glory, peace, and Might, he thought upon his Father and Mother (by whom he was cast into the Sea, who dwelled in far parts) and sent a Messenger, to let them know, that the King of Ægypt, upon such a day would be with them, to view those parts of the Country, and to sport himself, and to make a Royal feast. When the Messenger was thither come, they received him with

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bountiful entertainment, and large gifts, and sent him back, saying that their services should be ready at all times to do the Kings pleasure, but that they could not possibly discern that he should vouchsafe them that honour, whereof they were not worthy, as to visit them in those parts, to sport himself there a while.

The Messenger return'd, & shew'd the King how willingly they would receive him, and in what manner they did reward him, and how faithful they were & ready to do him service, wherewith the King was well pleased. When the set day was come, the King with a fair company rode towards his Fathers house, who was to his Father and Mother unknown.

When the King came near his Fathers Castle the Knight rode joyfully to meet him, and when he came nigh to the King he alighted and did him reverence upon his knees: but the King took him up presently, and commanded him to take horse again, and so they rode together unto the Castle.

And when they were come thither, the mother came unto him & fell upon her knees, and welcomed him gladly; and the King took her up as lovingly and kissed her: she said unto him. My Lord, you do us (unworthy) this honor with the presence of your most honorable Personage which we shall never be able to deserve.

After the Meat was all ready, and the time

of day was come to go to Dinner, the Father came with a Bason and Ewer, and the Mother with a Towel, saying, Sir, all things are ready pleaseth it you to wash, and when the King saw that, he smiled, and said to himself: Now is the Song of the Nightingale true, that my Father and my Mother should gladly do as I have said, if my self would thereunto consent: But he would not suffer them to do him any such service, saying, Your age is to be honoured and therefore I will have none of it, and then he called one of his servants, whom he commanded to do that service. Then said the Knight, you will not suffer us to do it for our honor, because we are not worthy thereof. The King said, have I not said, that for your age I forbear you. When the King was set at the Table, he set his Mother on the right hand of him, and his Father on the left, and then as much as they might, or durst, did behold his favour and countenance.

After Dinner, the King entred into a fair Chamber, and made the Knight with his Lady to follow him, and commanded all others to void their presence.

When they were all alone, the King said, have you no Children, they answered, We have neither Son nor Daughter. And the King said, had you never any? The Knight answered, we had one Son, but he is long ago

dead, The King asked of what death he died? And the Knight said, a natural death. Then the King said, if I find it otherwise, you are found in a most horrible fault. Then asked the Knight, My most honourable and renowned Lord, wherefore enquire you so earnestly after our son; The King answered, not without just cause, and therefore I must, and will know of what death he died: if you will not tell me, I shall cause you both to die a most shameful death.

When they heard that, they fell upon the ground on their knees before him, and asked him pardon and forgiveness. But the King would not suffer them to kneel, but took them up, and said: To that intent I came not unto your house, to eat your bread and to betray you: But say to me the very truth, and you shall be pardoned for it is given me to understand that you have put him to death, and if that you be found culpable therein, and come to judgement, you must die a most shameful death. Then said the Knight, My most honourable Lord, save my life, & I shall shew you the very truth. The King said, fear not, for I shall do you no harm. Then answered the Knight, and said, Most dread Soveraign Lord, we had a Son, that was wise, learned, and intellegent: and upon a time as he stood before us, and served at the Table, there came to the window a Nightingale,

ingale that sung exceeding sweetly, whose song he began to interpret, and to tell us what it meant, and said, this Bird singeth, that I shall become so great and mighty a Lord, that you my Father shall be glad to hold a Bason with Water to wash my hands, and my Mother a Towel, that if I will suffer it.

And when I heard that, I was sore moved, and vexed in my mind; and so I took him upon my shoulder, and cast him into the Sea for to drown him. Then said the King, what evil had come to you, if he had been made so great? Methinks it should have bin for your honour and profit. The Knight said, my renowned Lord, it was no reason, but wodness. The king answered: 'twas a great foolishness in you, that you would do against ỳ ordinance of God. And now you shall know for truth, I am your Son that you cast into the Sea, & God of his great mercy hath saved me, and by his grace brought me to this estate and dignity.

The Father and Mother hearing that, with fear and joy amazed, fell flat unto the ground: whom he lovingly took up, saying: Fear not but rather rejoyce for you shal suffer no harm: but my exaltetion shall be to your glory, and profit; and so he kist his Father and Mother with great joy. Then began the Mother to weep greatly; and the King said, to her, leave off your sorrowing, and be of good cheer, for in

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my Realm you shall be honoured above me during my life: And he took them with him into his Kingdom, where they dwelled a long time in honour and joy, and ended their days with comfort and love of all the people.

Here follows the Application of the Example to the purpose.

Then said Diocletian the Emperors Son, Lord, have you understood what I have said? the Emperor said right well: then said the Son, my most honoured and redoubted Father, although that God hath given and endued me with Wisdom and understanding above others, that shall not be an impairing of your honour and might; but more for the preservation and maintinance of the same: so in like manner, the Kings excellent Majesty, which was nothing to the hinderance of the Father, but this rather, for his worship, profit and greater comfort. For as long as they lived, it was in very great joy & mirth, that they were loved of the people, and honoured of the Kingdom. Then said the Emperor, my beloved Son, I will wholly resign all the Empire unto you to govern & rule: for I perceive well by your Narration, that you have to me declared that it is best for me, and most for my ease, that I now leave this worldly & tedious business, and the labour & care of a King, and betake me to my

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rest and ease, for I am old and feeble. Then answered the Son, and said unto his father, my most honourable Lord & Father, so shall it be; but as long as you live, you shall have the Authority and Government of the Empire at your command, as it appertaineth unto an Emperor; but in all the businesses that are laborious and troublesom, I will always be ready to minister any service that possible I can, according to my bounden duty.

How Judgment was given upon the Empress, and how that she and her Lover were both put to death.

Then the Emperor commanded the Judges and Justices to sit in Judgment, and to bring again the Empress before them: with the Ladies, and also the Ribauld, her best beloved cloathed in the vesture and habit of a woman, whom he did cause to stand next unto the Empress: then the Emperors Son asked sentence and just Judgment upon them, saying,

My most honourable Lord and Father, even as you are Emperour of the World, and that your Majesty and power requireth to do true justice unto all your subjects that desire it: so now I demand, that you this day do give right sentence and true judgment upon the untruth, falshood, and shame, which were put and alledg-

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led unto me by the Empress, for the which accusations, I have been seven times led unto the Gallows, and have stood in great jeopardy and peril of my life, and also that she hath been to you untrue of her body, as you have secretly good proof made before you; and one the which I ask judgment: and therefore command your Justices and Judges to give Sentence hereupon, according to Right, Equity, and law.

Assoon as the Empress heard this, she fell flat to the earth before the Emperor, asked mercy and forgiveness for her just offence and misdoing: but it helped nor profited nothing, for the Son would have right, and desired Judgement. Then spake the Judges and Justices, Her own Misdeeds condemn her, and the report of her Lemmon by her kept and found; therefore we give Sentence against the Empress, that she shall be bound to a Horses tail, and drawn through all the streets of the City, to the place of Execution, and there be burnt. Also judge and give Sentence against the Rebald, that he shall be quartered and smitten in pieces and his flesh cast to the Hounds, and Birds of the air to devour him; and this sentence was approbated and allowed of the people.

Hereafter in short time died the Emperor, and Diocletian his Son governed and ruled the Empire with great wisdom, and always held and kept his Masters with him in great honor

and

And glory. By whose Counsel and [illegible] governed the Empire; and he excelled all his Predecessors in Riches, and doing Right and Justice: and his Masters so loved above all others in the World, that many times they put themselves in great peril and jeopardy of their lives for him. And so ended their days in joy and honour, to the Praise of Almighty GOD.

FINIS.

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